

Attitudes Towards International Affairs Among the Students and Staff of the University of Edinburgh 1914-1939

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PhD
The University of Edinburgh
2007

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to my supervisors, Dr Paul Addison and Professor Robert Anderson, the City of Edinburgh Archivist Mr Richard Hunter for extensive information about his grandfather Mr David Mackenzie, staff at the various libraries and archives used (especially the University of Edinburgh Main Library Special Collections), and family and friends for all their support and encouragement.

Thesis Abstract

This thesis examines attitudes toward international affairs held by students and staff at the University of Edinburgh between 1914 and 1939, particularly those relating to the issues of war and peace. Specific ideological areas to be looked at include religious influences, nationalism and imperialism, racial concepts, health, fitness and eugenics, and Marxism.

Primary sources made use of throughout include the private papers and publications of officials and teaching staff at the university, newspaper letters and reports, University Court, Senatus, Faculty and other committee papers and minutes, official University publications and course text books, and student publications, society minutes and debating records.

In the main body of the thesis the relevant positions of the student body and University official and staff are looked at separately and a generally chronological approach followed, with the overall period divided up into World War One, the 1920s, and the 1930s respectively.

The conclusion seeks to evaluate the reasons why both students and staff offered up a generally vigorous support for Britain's war efforts in both 1914 and 1939, this in spite of the widespread popularity of pacifistic ideas throughout the period covered.

Thesis Declaration

A) This thesis has been written by Niall T Stuart.

B) It is all the author's own work.

C) Some of the factual material covering the 1930s period was previously included in an MSc Degree (by research).

Signature:

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Introduction

University Rejoicings

Music was supplied by the 2nd Gordon Highlanders and the Edinburgh Police Band and Pipers. Four thousand invitations were issued - 2500 by the University and 1500 by the Lord Provost and Magistrates. On the same night there was also a Cap and Gown Club supper in the Waterloo Rooms, and a torchlight procession, headed by the Q.E.R.V.B. band. The procession moved down the Bridges to Princes Street, along Charlotte Square, George Street, the Mound, and the Lawnmarket to the Castle Esplanade, where the torches were cast into an enormous blazing pile. It was said to be the largest, most brilliant, and best-organised torchlight procession that had ever been seen in Edinburgh.¹

In July 1933 the University of Edinburgh celebrated the three hundred and fiftieth anniversary of its foundation as the 'Tounis College' in 1583. The student population stood at a near all-time high figure of 4,243, and the first phase of a major new science and technology campus known as the King's Buildings had just been completed. The number of Chairs had also increased dramatically over the immediately preceding period, and the institution enjoyed a world-wide reputation for academic excellence, especially its Medical Faculty.

On the other hand just fifteen years prior to these festivities the University was hosting solemn commemorative events for the nearly one thousand members who had lost their lives during the First World War. As the 1930s progressed the international situation again rapidly deteriorated, and another worldwide conflict broke out in 1939 resulting in a further two hundred and thirty deaths among University members.

Throughout the period at hand Edinburgh University was fully involved in British national and imperial affairs at the highest levels, both through the formal and

¹ University of Edinburgh Press Cuttings YLF 1041. Edinburgh Evening News 1 July 1933

personal connections of officials and members of staff, and widespread employment of graduates in the government itself, military and civil state bodies, and the established religions of the day. The theories and published works of many of the leading academic figures at the University also had a far-reaching influence.

The aim of this thesis, therefore, is to uncover and evaluate the various ideas and activities related to international affairs in general, and war and peace in particular, present among students and staff at the University of Edinburgh during what were probably the most dramatic three decades of its existence. The introduction will outline the main political and ideological currents present during the period at hand, placing them into their contemporary historical context.

Looking first at these ideas and agendas which tended to militate against international conflict and warfare, outright pacifism had been promoted down the years by a series of spiritual teachers. The founder of the Jain religion, Nataputta Vardhamana (599-527 BC) made *Ahimsa*, or absolute non-violence, the first of the creed's 'Five Great Vows', and the Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama, 563-483 BC) suggested to his followers that, "Putting away the murder of that which lives, he abstains from destroying life. The cudgel and sword he lays aside; and, full of modesty and pity, he is compassionate and kind to all creatures that have life."¹

In the Sermon on the Mount recounted in the New Testament Book of Matthew, Jesus is quoted as stating that, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy...Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God...But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek,

¹ Foy, Whitfield (Ed), The Religious Quest. A Reader London: Routledge, 1978 p 199

turn to him the other also.”¹ These and similar sayings in The Bible meant that the Christian tradition always at least allowed for a belief in absolute non-violence.

During the pre-war period the world-renowned author and spiritual teacher Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) sought to divest mainstream organised Christianity of what he perceived to be its contradictory and immoral elements, including those tenets which sought to justify warfare. He stated in 1908 that, “The Christian teaching in its true meaning...ruled out any form of violence and consequently could not but condemn the whole structure of the world founded on violence.”² Because of these widely promoted ideas he came into conflict with both the Russian state and its established religion, and was excommunicated from the Orthodox Church in 1901. The principal founder of the Labour Party in Britain, James Keir Hardie (1856-1915) also adhered to a form of spirituality-based pacifism, claiming that, “The idea of resolving disputes by resorting to murder in the mass outrages every sense of right.”³

A number of Christian sects upheld wholly or primarily pacifistic beliefs, with the Society of Friends or Quakers representing by far the most important of such bodies in Britain during this time. The founder of the religion, Charles Fox stated in 1658, “Ye are called to peace, therefore follow it; that peace is in Christ, not in Adam in the fall. All that pretend to fight for Christ are deceived; for his kingdom is not of this world, therefore his servants do not fight. Fighters are not of Christ’s kingdom, but are without Christ’s kingdom”⁴, and a large number of members of the organisation were amongst those who refused to fight during World War One due to a ‘conscientious objection.’ As will be covered in greater detail later the only

¹ The New Testament Matthew 5:7 – 5:39

² Tolstoy, Leo A Confession and Other Religious Writings London: Penguin, 1987 p 175

³ <http://www.alba.org.uk/scot99results/cr02.html>

⁴ Amoss, George, The Works of George Fox 1990 Quaker Electronic Archive
<http://www.qis.net/~daruma/foxpeace.html>

Edinburgh University student known to have adopted this anti-war stance, William H Marwick (1894 -1982) both took part in the Quaker relief effort in France, and became an active member of the organisation after the end of the war.

By the late 1920s the reaction against the First World War had fully set in, and outright pacifism was being promoted in literature by authors such as Erich Remarque and Siegfried Sassoon. In 1933 the students of Oxford University passed the motion, 'This House would under no circumstances fight for its King and country' by 275 votes to 153, and their counter-parts at Glasgow elected the founder of the anti-war Peace Pledge Union, The Rev. Dick Sheppard (1880 – 1937) as their Lord Rector in 1937. Absolute non-violence therefore, whilst still very much a minority position remained widely understood and promoted in the years leading up to the outbreak of World War Two.

During the preceding centuries outright moral injunctions against warfare sat alongside more pragmatic schemes for its amelioration and ultimate abolition through the use of international arbitration, multilateral disarmament, and the outlawing of specific military practices. This was the legalistic approach favoured by philosophers and writers such as Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536), Emmanuel Kant (1724-1804), Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), and John Bright (1811-1889). Furthermore the eighteenth century Enlightenment viewpoint in general tended to challenge the unregulated exercise of state power and violence. The resultant pressures for a rigorous and enforceable body of international law in turn helped to bring about the first Geneva Convention of 1864, which mainly dealt with the correct treatment of combatants wounded in battle.

In 1898 Tsar Nicholas II of Russia (1868-1918) called for an international peace conference claiming that, “To put an end to these incessant armaments and to seek the means of warding off the calamities which are threatening the whole world - such is the supreme duty which is today imposed on all States.”¹ The first meeting duly took place at The Hague in 1899 and was attended by delegates from twenty-six nations including Great Britain, Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United States of America and Russia itself.² Amongst other measures it established a Permanent Court of Arbitration designed to avert warfare through the impartial resolution of disputes. Another Hague Peace Conference was held in 1907, this time attracting representatives from forty-three nations who agreed to, ‘The First and Second Conventions on the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes’ which modified and improved upon the previous arbitration measures. A third meeting was arranged for 1915, but this had to be cancelled due to the onset of World War One.

The League of Nations established after the war under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles was also based on an arbitration and international law based approach to the amelioration and eventual overcoming of international conflict. The Covenant of the League committed its signatories to accept an obligation ‘not to resort to war’, and a Permanent Court of International Justice was set up under its supervision to adjudicate over international disputes. The League of Nations was in fact undermined from the outset due to the refusal of the United States to participate, in spite of the fact that President Woodrow Wilson had been one of its main instigators.

¹ Scott, James Brown, The Hague Peace Conferences of 1899 and 1907; A Series of Lectures Delivered Before the Johns Hopkins University in the Year 1908 Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press 1909

² Rosenne, Shabtai (Ed.), The Hague Peace Conferences of 1899 and 1907 and International Arbitration: Reports and Documents Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001 p vi

Furthermore Germany and the U.S.S.R. were precluded from membership, though they were both later admitted in 1926 and 1934 respectively.

The League had a great deal of success in fields such as labour protection, refugee assistance and worldwide health care. The organisation also helped to settle a number of minor international quarrels during the 1920s, including a dispute between Greece and Bulgaria in 1925 which had already resulted in limited armed violence. However when serious conflicts broke out during the following decade such as the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and Italian assault on Abyssinia four years later, the League of Nations proved to be impotent. The historian A. J. P. Taylor dealt with Britain's own attitude to the body by pointing out that, "In practice, the League was treated as an extra, providing an agreeable meeting-place for statesmen and handling questions remote from power, such as the white slave traffic. When British interests were threatened, as at Shanghai in 1926, the British defended them in the old-fashioned way, by force of arms."¹

Furthermore, "British armaments were determined solely with reference to British needs. The chiefs of staff never asked specifically: 'What armaments do we need in order to discharge our commitments under the Covenant?' They used support for the League as an argument only when they wished to advocate increased armaments for some other purpose. Privately they regarded the League as a nuisance or even a danger."² Taylor concluded with, "Statesmen equivocated...Baldwin won the general election in 1935 by appearing to support the League of Nations. He himself had no faith in it. He never attended the League assembly, and he once attributed his

¹ Taylor, A. J. P. English History 1914-1945 Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965 p 318

² Ibid.

political misfortunes to the league of Nations Union, which had tried to make him take the League seriously.”¹

The League of Nations hosted a World Disarmament Conference in Geneva between 1932 and 1936, and this again proved to be unsuccessful. No agreement could be reached over what constituted offensive or defensive weapons, the British representatives rebuffed a proposal to outlaw aerial bombardment, and when the German delegation’s suggestion for parity of armaments was rejected they withdrew from the Conference. The Nazi regime then quit the League altogether in October 1933. Japan had already left the organisation, and by the mid 1930s remaining member states such as Britain and France had largely reverted to the unilateral military alliances and secret diplomacy which had preceded World War One.

During the years leading up to the outbreak of the First World War there were also specific ideological and practical forces operating within Britain’s universities which acted to counter the ever-increasing international tensions and instead promote peaceful coexistence. The university concept itself was based around the idea of a worldwide community of scholars free from sectarian division and strife, and the author and campaigner Norman Angell promoted an ‘International Polity Movement’ within the institutions which emphasised this principle. As the historian Stewart Wallace explained, “R. M. McIver, then a young lecturer at Aberdeen, also made extensive use of Angell’s ideas in his standard work Community (1914). War between ‘civilised peoples’, he noted, was simply ‘civil war’.”²

Furthermore in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries a large number of British students, particularly in the fields of Divinity and Philosophy, spent time

¹ Taylor, A. J. P. English History 1914-1945 p 318

² Wallace, Stuart War and the Image of Germany. British Academics 1914-1918 Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd, 1988 p 16

studying at German Universities and this led to close and friendly relations between the two academic communities. When war actually broke out in early August 1914 a group of Cambridge scholars put their names to a document protesting against Britain's involvement in the conflict. However, as Stewart Wallace further pointed out, "By the tenth of August letters began to appear from the signatories of the Cambridge manifesto. The German invasion of Belgium had caused an almost complete change of mind."¹ In general the university communities in all the combatant nations moved rapidly to a wholehearted support for their respective martial efforts.

Wallace went on to explain, "This collapse of liberal internationalism was of course not confined to Britain. Leading academics in the German peace movement, like the historian Karl Lamprecht and the scientist Wilhelm Ostwald, became convinced defenders of the German cause. In France the sociologist Emile Durkheim, who had been prominent in the *Comité de Rapprochement Franco-Allemand*, churned out wartime propaganda."² Furthermore, "Amongst British liberals there may have been 'sorrowful acceptance' of the realities of international power politics but there was also a feeling of relief once Belgium had provided a clear moral issue and a justification for closing ranks."³

Turning then to those ideological trends which tended to encourage international competition and strife, the first thing to note is that straightforward nationalism, indeed the nation-state system as a whole, remained by far the most divisive element throughout the period at hand. The writer and campaigner Aldous Huxley (1894-1963) defined the concept of a nation as 'a community organised for war'.

¹ Wallace, War and the Image of Germany p 26

² Ibid. p 27

³ Ibid. p 28

There is a great deal of historical controversy over the origins and development of both the nation-state and ideology of nationalism, but certainly human beings have been forming into autonomous groupings and engaging in violent conflict with similar bodies since the Old Testament era at least (i.e. c. 2000 BC).

In the sixteenth-century Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527) further underlined the essentially amoral and violence-orientated nature of the nation-state by claiming that “One’s country should be defended whether it entail ignominy or Glory, and that it is Good to defend it in any way whatsoever...For when the safety of one’s country wholly depends on the decision to be taken, no attention should be paid either to justice or injustice, to kindness or cruelty, or to its being praiseworthy or ignominious.”¹

Subsequent political and social theories of philosophers and reformers such as John Locke (1632-1704), Voltaire (1694-1788) and Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1788) argued in favour of a transfer of governmental control from absolute monarchs to democratically elected representatives. At the same time they fully upheld the ultimately violence-based power and sovereignty of the state, and also promoted a populist form of nationalism. The American War of Independence (1775–1783), French Revolution, Napoleonic Wars (1789-1815) and violent unifications of Germany and Italy during the nineteenth-century all involved both democratising and nationalistic elements. The historian Karl Dietrich Bracher emphasised the basically incompatible nature of these two concepts in arguing, “So long as even democratic foreign policy is primarily attuned to the ideas of national sovereignty, so long as

¹ Niccolo Machiavelli, The Discourses Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970 p 515

nationalism and national egotism emphasise the differences between states, the unifying and moderating tendencies of democracy will not be able to blossom.”¹

In the more immediately contemporary period the Russian author and campaigner mentioned above, Leo Tolstoy, also highlighted the close connections between nationalism and warfare. Commenting about the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 he argued that, “All the peoples of the so-called Christian world have been reduced by patriotism to such a state of brutality, that not only those who are obliged to kill or be killed.”² Furthermore, “And there is only one kind of help possible - it lies in the abolition of that terrible linking up into a core of violence. And there is only one way of destroying this binding together - it is by shaking off the hypnotism of patriotism.”³

Looking then at the general pattern of attitudes to nationalism in Britain and Europe over the period at hand, these comprised increasing patriotic sentiment during the late Victorian and Edwardian periods leading up to in the First World War. The conflict was followed by a period of relative reflection and moderation, with the late 1920s representing the pinnacle of inter-war reconciliation and stability. The following decade, however, witnessed the rise to power of extreme nationalist and totalitarian movements in countries such as Germany, Spain and Japan and a concomitant increase in international tensions. This in turn led to a reversion to more traditional insular outlooks and agendas in still democratic states such as Great Britain itself, with the whole period ending in another global conflict.

¹ Bracher, Karl Dietrich, The German Dictatorship. The Origins, Structure and Consequences of National Socialism Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973 p 612

² David Stephens (ed.) Government is Violence. Essays on Anarchism and Pacifism by Leo Tolstoy London: Phoenix Press 1990 p 83

³ Ibid.

The League of Nations, though as indicated above established primarily to prevent further outbreaks of warfare was in fact based solidly on the principles of national sovereignty and self-determination. Because of this the organisation in many ways perpetuated and exacerbated the very ideological and practical forces it was designed to overcome, and in any case was entirely unable to resist the vigorous resurgence of patriotic feeling which took place across the world during the 1930s.

An extension of the nationalist theme particularly relevant to this era was that of imperialism. This involved the theory and practice of extending national territories through conquest or treaties for economic and strategic gain, and more positively providing the governed communities with perceived benefits. The late nineteenth and early twentieth century competition for African and other colonies among European states was one of the main background causes of WWI itself, and the British empire was at its territorial height just before the outbreak of the Second World War.

Edinburgh University itself was known as ‘The Imperial University’, as throughout the period at hand it possessed the largest number of dominion and colonial students of all the British higher educational institutions. In November 1929, for example, the newspaper of the Students’ Representative Council reported that, “There seems to be no falling-off in evidence to support Edinburgh’s claim to be the Imperial University. During Session 1928-29 there were matriculated 650 students from overseas, Cambridge coming next with 637, while Glasgow was sixth, with 186.”¹

The historian Ian Wotherspoon explained this leading position by pointing out that, “Edinburgh had a long history of contact with scholars and academic

¹ The Student 5 November 1929 p 48

institutions outside Scotland....There is little doubt too that the University played a major role in, and long benefited from, the internationally recognised artistic, cultural and intellectual advances which took place in Scotland at the end of the eighteenth century.”¹ Furthermore, “The University was well placed to take advantage of the opportunities imperial expansion offered. Its support for administrative and curricular reform ensured it a level of efficiency and status which attracted able academics who contributed to the growth of the University’s international standing, particularly in medicine. Invention, innovation and curriculum that was clinically focussed ensured the Faculty of Medicine a growing reputation.”²

Wotherspoon also emphasised that Edinburgh’s involvement with the Empire was a two-way process, stating that, “More importantly, newly gained knowledge and professional skills acquired in Edinburgh were propagated overseas where they would take root, and be nurtured, within the administrative and institutional framework of the empire.”³ He continued, “Meeting imperial educational needs provided the University with a multicultural exposure and expanded connections and influence overseas. Trained in an institution that was a major stakeholder in the Empire, Edinburgh graduates served British needs overseas attesting, in the words of a student newspaper of 1902, to ‘the magnificent imperialism of our *Alma Mater*’”⁴

The historian highlighted both the nationalistic and perceived ethical dimensions of the imperial project with, “For many graduates who went overseas between 1880 and 1914, Empire was about encouraging 'civilisation', developing trade and protecting those who could not protect themselves against hostile forces - excluding

¹ Wotherspoon, Ian. The British Empire and International Students at the University of Edinburgh 1880-1914 PHD Thesis 2002 p 19

² Ibid. p 20

³ Ibid. p 28

⁴ Ibid.

the British.”¹ Furthermore, “They saw Britain as being called to a special role in the world and as Edinburgh University equipping them with the knowledge and skills to help achieve imperial objectives. It was also, in Robert Falconer’s words, ‘a moral empire, united for the maintenance of international law, liberty, human well-being.’”²

The negative aspects of imperial attitudes and practices were also noted by Ian Wotherspoon when he pointed out that, “Undergraduate perceptions of overseas students probably changed very little at Edinburgh University over the period between 1880 and 1914. Writing of his time as a student in the years before the outbreak of hostilities in 1914, Charles L. Warr (MA 1914) recalled a measure of prejudice in what was then recognised as ‘the most colonial of the universities of Great Britain.’”³ Warr continued, “The colour bar, I’m afraid, was much more evident than now, and the Indian and other coloured students mixed but little with their white contemporaries, to their great loss and ours.”⁴

Turning then to another contemporary ideological impulse which provided the more regressive aspects of both nationalism and imperialism with an enormous boost, the theory of social-Darwinism first emerged in the late nineteenth century and by the outbreak of World War One had become widely influential. Charles Darwin’s On the Origin of the Species was published in 1859, and the book’s contentions about evolutionary progress emerging from a process of frequently violent struggle known as ‘The Survival of the Fittest’ were almost immediately extrapolated onto the sphere of humanity.

¹ Wotherspoon, The British Empire and International Students at the University of Edinburgh 1880-1914 p 226

² Ibid. p 227

³ Ibid. p 54

⁴ Ibid.

It is often maintained that Darwin (1809-1882) himself dismissed the anthropological and political application of his theories. However in his later work The Descent of Man (1871) the biologist overtly applied the competitive and amoral aspects of his general evolutionary claims to human beings themselves. For example Darwin argued that, “Extinction follows chiefly from the competition of tribe with tribe, and race with race. Various checks are always in action, serving to keep down the numbers of each savage tribe - such as periodical famines, nomadic habits and the consequent deaths of infants, prolonged suckling, wars, accidents, sickness, licentiousness, the stealing of women, infanticide, and especially lessened fertility.”¹

Charles Darwin first studied at the University of Edinburgh itself between 1825 and 1827, though he left without obtaining a medical degree. His biographer Adrian Desmond pointed out that it was there that he first developed an interest in biology. “After hiking through Wales during the summer of 1826, inspired by Gilbert White’s Natural History of Selborne which taught him to see birds as more than targets, he returned to Edinburgh. His interest in medicine gone, he joined the thriving student Plinian Society. Here he heard the tyros talk on classification and cuckoos, and he even spoke himself.”² The Plinian Society at Edinburgh University was also promoting anti-religious, materialistic and nascent evolutionary ideas all of which would be highly influential on Darwin’s later works. Desmond again pointed out that, “There was sometimes a frisson in these basement meetings in 1826, generated by a handful of young radical freethinkers using a deterministic science against the

¹ Darwin, C. R. The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex London: John Murray, 1901 p 550

² Matthew H. C. G. and Harrison, Brian (eds) Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. From the Earliest Times to the Year 2000 Volume 15 Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004 p 179

Church of Scotland.”¹ Furthermore, “Darwin was nominated for the Plinian by the anti-clerical phrenologist William A. F. Browne, among others, and he petitioned to join on 21 November 1826...Darwin joined a week later, with the Unitarian W. R. Greg, who read a paper on lower animals’ possessing every human mental faculty. Darwin himself was on the council of the Plinian Society by 5 December 1826.”²

Some of the explicitly ideological and political influences on Charles Darwin’s evolutionary theories are highlighted in another passage looking at his post-university activities. Adrian Desmond argues that, “This work [of the 1850s on fossils] brought Darwin into closer contact with Huxley...[who] with Herbert Spencer was part of a growing meritocratic, secularist network in London which was to make the world safe for Darwin’s theories.”³ Furthermore, “These men, marginal to the Oxbridge-Anglican power structure, were recasting society and nature as a competitive market-place in the relaunched Westminster Review, seeking to claw power from a church establishment.”⁴

As indicated in the quotation from The Descent of Man the pseudo-scientific concept of race was integral to Darwinian evolutionary theories from the outset. The first work on scientific racism is usually ascribed to Count Joseph-Arthur Gobineau (1816-82) and his The Inequality of the Human Races (1853). However a lecturer and anatomist associated with the University of Edinburgh itself had produced a systematic account of the subject three years earlier. In The Races Of Man, Dr Robert Knox (1791-1862) claimed that, “Men are of various Races; call them Species, if you will; it matters not. The fact, the simple fact, remains just as it was:

¹ Oxford Dictionary of National Biography p 179

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. p 187

⁴ Ibid.

men are of different races. Now, the object of these lectures is to show that in human history race is everything.”¹

Dr Knox also predated Darwin’s ideas of racial competition and the inevitable extinction of the ‘lower’ ones with, “Have we done with the Hottentots and Bosjeman race? I suppose so; already there is the skin of one stuffed in England; another in Paris if I mistake not...No one can believe them to be of the same race as ourselves; yet, unquestionably, they belong to the genus man.”² Furthermore, “They are shrew, and show powers of mimicry - acquire language readily, but never can be civilized. That I think quite hopeless...In a word, they are fast disappearing from the face of the earth.”³

The concept that humanity was divided up into a hierarchy of scientifically definable races very quickly became firmly established over the course of the nineteenth century, especially in Britain itself. The theory not only promoted inter-human inequality and conflict in general but specifically the frequently violence-based project of European colonial expansion.

Furthermore both the concept of racial supremacism and resultant discriminatory practices remained almost universally endorsed throughout the period at hand, as indicated here by the historian Elazar Barkan. “Because racism nowadays is perceived as irrational and unscientific, its elimination from culture and science is deemed, at least implicitly, to have been inevitable: once Nazi atrocities had been revealed, racism was rejected. An extension of this view is the historical misconception that Nazi racism was renounced as early as the 1930s.” The piece concluded, “In fact, the response in both the United States and Britain was neither

¹ Knox, Robert, The Races of Men. A Fragment London: Henry Renshaw, 1850 p 2

² Ibid., p 238

³ Ibid., p 239

immediate nor of sufficient strength to discredit theories of racial superiority. By 1938 only a small segment of the educated public had reformulated its attitude on the question of race in response to the Nazi menace.”¹

Another pseudo-science connected to social-Darwinism which emerged during the latter part of the nineteenth-century was that of Eugenics. The term was first coined by Charles Darwin’s cousin Francis Galton (1822-1911) in his work Inheritance of Human Faculties (1884), and refers to both the study of alleged heritable characteristics, and resultant practical schemes designed to improve the quality of the human ‘stock’ through voluntary and involuntary restrictions on procreation.

From the outset such ideas were incorporated into the contemporary Social-Darwinian quest for ‘national fitness’ and readiness for military struggle, as indicated here by the historian Geoffrey Searle. “There was another reason why eugenicists presented their cause as a ‘patriotic’ one. Only patriotism, they argued, could give large numbers of which would enable them to purify their stock and initiate schemes for racial improvement.”² Furthermore, “In the words of the Whethams [Mr and Mrs Whetham, the founders of the Cambridge University Eugenic Society in 1911]: ‘The power of combination and organization, the social instinct, readiness for self-sacrifice, the common good, love of home, country, and race – in a word, patriotism – all are needed to bring to birth and to develop a nation fit to hold its own in the fiery trial of war, and in the slow, grinding stress of economic competition.’”³ Searle

¹ Barkan, The Retreat of Scientific Racism p 1

² Searle, G. Eugenics and politics in Britain, 1900-1914 Leyden: Noordhoff International Publishers, 1976 pp 34

³ Ibid.

concluded, “Needless to say, the Whethams assumed that success in the earnest rivalries of peace and war would go to the racially fit.”¹

Eugenicist arguments were frequently deployed by the military conscription movement popular in Britain during the period leading up to World War One. For example Colonel Melville, Professor of Hygiene at the Royal Army Medical College, stated in an article in The Eugenics Review in 1910 that military service was, “eugenically useful because it [kept] prominently before the community ideals of physical fitness and efficiency as well as of courage and patriotism.”² Furthermore, “It may be...that an occasional war is of service by reason of the fact that in times of danger the nation attends to the virility of its citizens.”³

Practical attempts were made throughout the period at hand to have legally binding eugenicism-based measures introduced into Britain. For example in the late 1920s the Labour Government gave its backing to the findings of the Wood Committee of the Boards of Education and Control. As the historian Pauline Mazumdar explained, “The report defined the lowest 10 percent on the social scale as the social problem group. As a group, it was associated not only with feeble-mindedness, but also with insanity, epilepsy, pauperism, crime, unemployability and alcoholism. Only about 10 per cent of this group could actually be certified under present laws, but the Committee thought the others were probably carriers of defect.”⁴

Moreover, the follow-up board of investigation which sat between 1932 and 1934 sought advice from the British Eugenics Society, and that organisation in turn called

¹ Searle, Eugenics and politics in Britain p 34

² Ibid., p 36

³ Ibid.

⁴ Mazumdar, Pauline, Eugenics, Human Genetics and Human Failings. The Eugenics Society, its Sources and Critics in Britain London: Routledge, 1992 p 199

upon the expertise of Ernst Rüdin, the principle formulator of the strict eugenicist measures implemented by the Nazi regime in Germany. The resultant Brock Report of 1934 again backed a policy of voluntary sterilisation, and the subsequent campaign in its favour was supported by organisations as influential and diverse as the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, the Royal College of Nursing, the British Social Hygiene Council, the National Conference of Labour Women, the Conservative Women's Reform Association and the National Council of Women.¹

Sterilisation was not in fact introduced into Britain during the period at hand, but mainly because the preferred policy throughout was the similarly oppressive one of the social isolation of those deemed to be 'feeble-minded' or otherwise 'unfit'. A Mental Deficiency Act had been passed by 358 votes to 15 in the House of Commons in 1913, and as the historian Mathew Thomson pointed out, "This provided the apparatus for the compulsory and permanent segregation of the feeble-minded."²

The Parliamentary debates which preceded this measure fully illustrate the patriotic and militaristic strands which were integral to the eugenicist movement and agenda throughout. In 1912 the Conservative MP Gershom Stewart introduced a Feeble-Minded Control Bill to the House of Commons and argued that, "The whole social body now obsequiously and willingly submits itself to great changes for the aged, infirm, the weak, the blind, and the unfortunate in every possible direction, because they have been or may be, effective citizens; but...we are to run grave

¹ Mazumdar Eugenics, Human Genetics and Human Failings p 210

² Thomson, Mathew, The Problem of Mental Deficiency. Eugenics, Democracy, and Social Policy in Britain c. 1870-1959 p.39

risks...by consenting to being escorted by a helpless army of camp followers who can never be efficient people.”¹

Furthermore, “An Army which has to march through difficult country must do something to unembarrass itself of such a weight as that, and we, with industrial competition very severe and with the grave possibility of national danger always in front of us, are, I think, within our rights in taking steps to try and improve the present condition of things.”²

Another aspect of the period at hand that involved at least some eugenicist and generally social-Darwinian dimensions was the health and fitness movement which became increasingly popular during the inter-war years. The contemporary concept of fitness had explicitly militaristic dimensions as the historian Robert Graves indicated. “The early nineteenth century origins of the phrase ‘Keep Fit’ was a military one with the words ‘for service’ understood.”³

Much of the state-led promotion of national fitness during the 1920s and 1930s was informed by surveys of recruitment during World War One. These revealed that a large percentage of those who attempted to enlist were ‘C3’s, or unsuitable for service, as opposed to the desired and optimal ‘A1’ category. These concerns continued throughout the period, for example in late 1930 during a Commons debate the M.P. Major Glyn asked the Labour Minister for Health, Arthur Greenwood, “Whether his attention had been drawn to the number of rejections of men offering themselves for enlistment in the Foot Guards and the infantry of the Regular Army during the period 1st July to 30th September, 1930, namely 6,500 rejections out of

¹ Thomson, The Problem of Mental Deficiency p 42

² Ibid.

³ Graves, Robert, and Hodge, Alan, The Long Weekend. A Social History of Great Britain. 1918-1939 London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1941 p 382

10,147 men offering themselves for enlistment, or 62 per cent.”¹ The Minister replied, “The figures quoted by the hon. and gallant Member indicate one of the many grounds which render desirable a general improvement in the public health.”² A National Fitness Campaign was launched in 1935, and government funding provided for sporting and training facilities at schools, local authority playing fields and other centres across the country.

Another specific aspect of the overall health and fitness movement of the period was the greatly increased popularity of outdoor and nature-based activities such as camping, hiking, and youth hostelling, especially during the 1930s. These activities again had many nationalistic and social-Darwinian aspects alongside the purely recreational ones. For example in 1931 the magazine of the National Party of Scotland reported on a newly formed youth group known as ‘Clan Scotland’ and claimed that, “The National organisations of Youth of many Continental countries gave them a new carriage and a manly bearing superior to the Scots; they had placed a new value on physical development because they were developing themselves to become worthy citizens of a great race.”³ Furthermore, “That was imposed on German Youth, for example, by a German Dictator, but it is a good thing in itself nevertheless...Hiking for health is good, but when a group of lads go hiking through our hills that they may discover Scotland, pledged to devote their renewed strength in the service of Scotland.”⁴

Another important conflict-promoting ideology and agenda which first emerged in the latter part of the nineteenth-century was the economic and political theory of

¹ Parliamentary Debates (Commons), Fifth Series, Vol. 244 28 October - 14 November 1930 Col. 1850.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ The Scots Independent November 1934 p197

Marxism. This materialistic and atheist philosophy claimed that all historical progress emerged from the violent competition between economic classes, with the culminating stage of this process consisting of the overthrow of the 'Bourgeoisie' by the 'Industrial Proletariat', or 'Working Class'. It was further maintained that such a millenarian worldwide revolution would inaugurate a condition of permanent universal equality, prosperity and peace.

There were many parallels between this competition-based interpretation of history and the social-evolutionary theories of Charles Darwin, indeed after the publication of On the Origin of Species Karl Marx (1818-1883) informed his collaborator Freidrich Engels (1820-1895) that he had discovered the book, "which contains the basis in natural history for our views."¹ Marx further wished to dedicate a collected edition of his works to Darwin, and in another letter of January of 1861 stated that, "Darwin's book is very important and serves me as a basis of struggle in history."²

The explicitly violent nature of the ideology and agenda can be gleaned from an address given to the Communist League by Karl Marx himself in 1850. He stated that, "The arming of the whole proletariat with rifles, guns, and ammunition should be carried out at once [and] the workers must organize themselves into an independent guard, with their own chiefs and general staff."³ Furthermore, "[The working class] must act in such a manner that the revolutionary excitement does not collapse immediately after the victory. On the contrary, they must maintain it as long

¹ Zirkle, Conway in: Evolution, Marxian Biology, and the Social Scene Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1959 p 86

² Ibid.

³ Burns, Emile (ed) Handbook of Marxism London: Gollancz, 1935 p 67

as possible.”¹ The passage concluded, “Far from opposing so-called excesses, such as sacrificing to popular revenge hated individuals or public buildings to which hateful memories are attached, such deeds must not only be tolerated, but their direction must be taken in hand in order to make examples.”²

Both overtly Marxist revolutionary and Marxism-influenced parties were formed throughout Europe during the years leading up to 1914. Their relative success both in electoral terms and through the incitement of popular demonstrations and strikes exacerbated the domestic and international instabilities which led up to the outbreak of war. Furthermore in November 1917 the Russian Bolshevik Party seized control of the liberal revolution which had already overthrown the Tsarist system, and instigated the world’s first Marxist regime.

During the inter-war period Communist groupings remained extremely active worldwide, and these were now largely directed by the Moscow-based Communist International organisation. The Communist Party of Great Britain was launched under the auspices of the Comintern in 1920, and though it never achieved a mass membership like its Continental counterparts the C.P.G.B. was highly effective due to both the dedication of its participants, and financial and propagandist backing from the U.S.S.R..

Communist activity and influence in Britain further increased after 1933 when the Soviet government switched from a policy of international conflict and revolutionary subversion to that of seeking a ‘Popular Front’ with any political parties and countries willing to join an alliance against the newly installed Nazi regime and Fascism in general. The British Communist Party was especially prominent during

¹ Burns, Handbook of Marxism p 66

² Ibid.

the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39, organising and leading the 2,000 strong British Battalion of the International Brigades as well as directing the propagandist effort at home. A Marxism-based Left Book Club was inaugurated by Victor Gollancz in the same year as the outbreak of fighting in Spain, and by the eve of World War Two this had nearly 70,000 members and readers.

There was also a pronounced and increasing Marxist influence in Britain's Universities during this period. A number of senior researchers associated primarily with Cambridge University such as J.B.S. Haldane, J.D. Bernal, Joseph Needham, Lancelot Hogben and Hyman Levy established the Left-leaning Association of Scientific Workers in 1927, and in general campaigned to have science promoted to a leading role in a planned state economy of the sort that existed in the Soviet Union. They also endorsed the Comintern-led Popular Front against fascism, supported the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War, and were among the most vigorous proponents of the creation of a comprehensive nationwide system of air-raid protection in the run-up to World War Two. As the historian Gary Werskey put it, "The scientific Left, with some notable exceptions, whole-heartedly supported the national war effort from the very onset of the Second World War. Indeed, the greatest fear of many radicalised scientific workers was that their skills would not be effectively utilized by the fighting services."¹

The last major ideological area to be covered is that of institutionalised religion. In spite of the encroachment of atheistic and materialist philosophies such as Marxism and biological determinism, organised Christianity remained extremely widely adhered to during this period in Britain. Looking at its stances toward the issue of

¹ Werskey, Gary The Visible College Free Association Books: London, 1988 pp 262

war and peace, the mainstream Christian Church had renounced its earlier pacifism and adopted the *Bellum Justum*, or Just War theory, shortly after it became incorporated into the Roman state in the fourth century. The Roman Emperor Constantine (285-337 AD) converted to the religion in 312 AD, and later in the same century St Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD) developed a Christian ethical defence of any warfare which was based on “just intent, just disposition, just auspices and just conduct.” The doctrine was further refined and entrenched in the thirteenth century by St Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274) in his Summa Theologica.

Since the Reformation of 1560 the national Church of Scotland had adhered to a basically Calvinistic theology. This included the twin doctrines of predetermination and the existence of the ‘elect’ and ‘damned’, or those pre-selected by God for Heaven and Hell respectively. Such deterministic outlooks could undermine a belief in the ability to fully overcome evil and suffering in the world, including that induced by warfare and violence in general. The Church of Scotland also fully endorsed both the Pauline concept of obedience to ‘magistrates’, or governmental officials, and the Just War theory itself, and by the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries its leadership at least was generally fully supportive of the various martial efforts of the British state.

At the height of the World War One itself the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland sent the following message to King George V, as reported in The Scotsman. “We are deeply moved by the assurance of Your Majesty's unfeigned satisfaction with the zeal of the ministry of the Churches in Scotland in the performance of their duties at home and abroad and of Your Majesty's high appreciation of their courage and endurance in facing the perils of war and in ministering to the sick and

sorrowful.”¹ Furthermore, “Most respectfully do we assure Your Majesty of our unswerving loyalty to Your Majesty's person and throne, of our sincere admiration of the noble example Your Majesty has shown to the nation of self-denial, fortitude, and devotion amid arduous and trying duties, of our firm persuasion that our cause is righteous, and of our steadfast confidence that the valiant and self-sacrificing efforts of Your Majesty's forces and those of our Allies will, by the help of God, be crowned with victory and a lasting peace.”²

Like many other groupings, however, the aftermath of WWI led to a period of ideological reflection and reappraisal, and by the early 1930s the Church of Scotland through its Church and Nation Committee was allowing the outright pacifist position to coexist with the more traditional Just War one.

The University of Edinburgh itself was heavily inter-linked at the academic and institutional levels with the Church of Scotland. These ties with local and national organised religion were further enhanced by the merger of the United Free Church and Church of Scotland in 1929, followed by that of New College and the Divinity Faculty in 1935. Undergraduate Christian societies were also among the most active and popular of student clubs throughout the period at hand.

Turning then to the main body of the thesis, the contents will follow a generally chronological pattern with the overall period divided up into World War One, the 1920s and the 1930s respectively. Attitudes towards international affairs held by the staff and students at the University of Edinburgh during this time will be covered in turn. The specific ideologies and agendas to be examined throughout will primarily consist of those relating to war and peace, with particular attention paid to the

¹ The Scotsman 27 May 1916 p 7

² Ibid.

underlying nationalistic, imperial, social-Darwinian, Marxist and religious theories outlined above.

Chapter One. World War One: Staff

Memorial to the Right Hon. H. H. Asquith, Prime Minister. From the Senatus Academicus of the University of Edinburgh. The Senatus Academicus of the University of Edinburgh have had under their consideration the serious nature of the crisis through which the nation is passing, and they have unanimously resolved that in their opinion the time has come when it is necessary for the Government to organise the available men and resources of the country for the successful prosecution of the war...If the Government should fail to provide the needed guidance, or if the nation should fail to respond to its guidance, the Senatus desire to put upon record their conviction that the inevitable defeat, or that indecisive result of the war which would be equivalent to defeat, will by the verdict of future history be attributed, not to the inability of the nation to achieve victory, but to the unwillingness of the Government and the people to take the measures imperatively required to attain this end. On behalf of the Senatus Academicus, and with the assurance of the eager desire of that body to serve the interests of the community, this Memorial is presented to the Prime Minister.¹

In July 1915 the Senatus of the University of Edinburgh sent a forthright message to the Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, which was both critical of the general management of the war and called for the general mobilisation of the British population. By this time the University itself had been turned over wholesale to the war effort, with several hundred male students already enlisted in the armed forces and the remainder strongly encouraged to join the Officers' Training Corps. Shortly after the war broke out in August 1914 the Senatus discussed a report from the Medical Faculty which, "Recommended that all male students attending the University this winter should be advised to undergo Military Training. The Senatus approved, and remitted to the Military Education Committee to make the necessary arrangements for providing Military Training."¹

¹ University of Edinburgh Senatus Academicus. Printed Minutes Volume I Oct. 1913 to July 1917 1 July 1915 p 272

² Ibid., 8 October 1914 p149

During World War One the University not only supervised intensive military training for both undergraduate and external officer cadets but also engaged in armaments development and manufacture, war-related medical research and care, and organised a whole series of propagandist meetings and lectures both in Edinburgh itself and at the front in France. In many ways the institution had switched from being an independent seat of learning to an extension of the military wing of the British state. This chapter will therefore look at relevant statements of officials and staff immediately before and during the conflict in order to uncover explanations for this dramatic transformation.

The basic constitutional and administrative structures of the University of Edinburgh in place during the early part of the twentieth century were established by the Universities (Scotland) Acts of 1858 and 1889. As a consequence of these measures the University had been removed from the overall supervision of Edinburgh Town Council and two new internal executive bodies established, the Court and General Council. The University Court replaced the *Senatus Academicus* as the supreme governing body of the institution and comprised the Rector, who acted as *ex officio* chairman, the Principal, and Assessors nominated by the Chancellor, Rector, General Council and *Senatus* itself. The Lord Provost of Edinburgh and one further Assessor nominated by the town council also sat on the body.

The General Council included the Chancellor, members of the Court, the Professoriate, and all graduates of the University. It met twice yearly and could make non-binding recommendations to the Court. Alongside this advisory capacity its

principal power lay in the right to elect the University Chancellor.

This position was to some extent an honorary one held by a major public figure for life. On the other hand the Chancellor did have real powers in the form of a representation on the University Court, and also the right to call extraordinary meetings of the General Council. Furthermore the constituency for the post brought together officials, staff and graduates, and thus to some extent at least the choice reflected the ideological outlooks of the non-student body of the institution as a whole. Looking then at the first Chancellor in place during the period at hand, Arthur J. Balfour (1848-1930) was elected to the position in 1891, and held it until his death in 1930. At the time of his elevation Balfour was just forty-three years of age, but already the Conservative Leader of the House of Commons and a former Chief Secretary for Ireland.

Lord Balfour was also one of the earliest advocates of the social-Darwinist creed which first emerged in the late Nineteenth Century. As the historian Ruddock Mackay explained, “Men of Balfour’s scientific temperament were obliged to look elsewhere than to theology for a moral sanction in their dealings with subject peoples, and this was found in the evolutionist creed of man, which in the sixties and seventies imposed itself on the thought of the day as a development of Darwin’s ‘Origin of the Species’.”¹ Furthermore, “This represented the world of life no longer as an ordered harmony, but as in its essence a struggle for existence...The rule of survival of the fittest was seized on eagerly by our imperialistic politicians.”² However, “This line of reasoning was in 1887 confined to a very few political

¹ Mackay, Ruddock F. Balfour. Intellectual Statesman Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1985 p 17

² Ruddock F. Balfour. Intellectual Statesman p 17

thinkers, perhaps only to the family group of which Balfour was presently to become the accepted leader.”¹ Partly because of this Arthur Balfour also upheld the racially supremacist ideas and agendas which were increasingly popular during the period. His biographer Denis Judd pointed out that, “Balfour held gloomy views as to the potentialities of non-Europeans. Given this, it is not surprising that he envisaged a ‘black peril’ and wished to keep it at arm’s length.”²

Lord Balfour did express some degree of opposition to the anti-Jewish prejudice and persecution which was common at the time, indeed was the author of the 1917 Balfour Declaration committing Great Britain to the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. On the other hand the Zionist ideology and agenda itself had an anti-Semitic edge to it, as can be seen in some of Balfour’s own comments on the subject. In an essay entitled ‘A Brief Note on Zionism’ he stated, “It is no doubt true that in large parts of Europe their loyalty to the state in which they dwell is (to put it mildly) feeble compared with their loyalty to their religion and their race...Constant oppression, with occasional outbursts of violent persecution, are apt either to crush their victims, or to develop in them self-protecting qualities which do not always assume an attractive shape.”³

Furthermore, “Zionism is no mere local adventure, but a serious attempt to mitigate the age-long miseries created for Western civilisation by the presence in its midst of a population too long regarded as alien and even hostile, which it has been equally unable to expel or to absorb.”⁴ The Earl of Balfour was also Prime Minister

¹ Ruddock F. Balfour. Intellectual Statesman p 17

² Judd, Denis Balfour and the British Empire. A Study in Imperial Evolution 1874-1932 MacMillan: London, 1968 p19

³ Balfour, James, Essays, Speculative and Political London: Hodder and Staughton, 1924 p 261

⁴ Ibid. p 256

when the Aliens Act was passed in 1905, and this measure was at least partially designed to curb Jewish immigration into Great Britain.¹

In any case Balfour's career involved many overtly militaristic dimensions throughout. He was known as 'Bloody Balfour' due to some of the coercive measures he implemented during his period as Irish Secretary (1887-1891), and as Prime Minister between 1902 and 1905 was responsible for the establishment of both the Committee for Imperial Defence and Entente Cordiale military alliance with France. Indeed Lord Balfour was subsequently one of the primary instigators of the armaments race between Great Britain and Germany which preceded the outbreak of hostilities in 1914.

The historian Sydney Zebel pointed out that, "In 1908, Balfour was invited by Asquith to sit on a C.I.D. [Committee on Imperial Defence] sub-committee which studied the possibility of a German invasion. Balfour, who had long considered naval power the key to insular security, was obviously dissatisfied with Britain's margin of superiority in dreadnoughts over Germany." Furthermore, "In early 1909, therefore, he enlisted the assistance of two Conservative friends, George Wyndham and Arthur Lee. By popularising the jingoistic slogan, 'We want Eight, and we won't wait'... The trio created a naval scare [which] had a direct effect on Lloyd George's famous 1909 budget."²

In an essay entitled 'Anglo-German Relations' published in 1912 Balfour revealed some of the concerns which were leading him to encourage vigorous rearmament in Britain at this time. "The deep uneasiness with which the people of this country

¹ Pellow, Jim 'The Home Office and the Aliens Act 1905' in The Historical Journal Vol 32 No 2 June 1989 pp 369-385

² The Historical Journal Vol 32 No 2 June 1989 pp 369-385

contemplate possible developments of German policy throws its shadows across the whole of the country, irrespective of party or creed.”¹ Furthermore, “The danger lies elsewhere. It lies in the co-existence of that marvellous instrument of warfare, the German army and navy, with the assiduous, I had almost said the organised, advocacy of a policy which it seems impossible to reconcile with the peace of the world or the rights of nations.”² The author concluded, “For those who accept this policy German development means German territorial expansion...let them assume that Germany should be endowed at the cost of other nations with overseas dominions proportionate to her greatness in Europe. But do not let them ask Englishmen to approve.”³

During World War One itself Balfour was in turn First Lord of the Admiralty (1915-16) then Foreign Secretary between 1916 and 1919. He maintained a close contact with Edinburgh University throughout, sending a message of encouragement to the Senatus in January 1915. “Our Edinburgh statistics are most eminently satisfactory. I think we have every reason to be proud of our answer to the call of patriotism.”⁴ The following summer the University Chancellor expressed his endorsement for the Role of Honour, or list of fatalities, that was then being compiled. The Scotsman reported him as stating, “From our University there have gone forth to every comer of the world uncounted multitudes skilled in letters, in science, and in all the arts, and of healing.”¹ Furthermore, “I am proud to think that when their country calls, and the freedom of mankind is in the balance, the

¹ Balfour, James, Essays, Speculative and Political London: Hodder and Staughton, 1924 p 200

² Ibid., p 204

³ Ibid., p 205

⁴ University of Edinburgh Senatus Academicus. Printed Minutes Volume Oct. 1913 to July 1917 14 January 1915 p201

Edinburgh students of to-day have proved themselves not less admirable in the stress of war than were their predecessors in the calm of peace.”²

Lord Balfour also gave a major speech in Edinburgh’s Usher Hall in January 1918 at which he outlined the developing Allied peace terms, and in particular the idea of a post-war League of Nations. Balfour was introduced to the meeting as both University Chancellor and ‘a distinguished Scotsman’, and The Scotsman reported him as arguing, “That Germany 's peculiar sense of honour made her refuse to repair the cruel and wanton outrages she had inflicted. The mere statement of our war aims, as in the recent declarations of President Wilson and the Prime Minister, showed by contrast what were the war aims of our enemies.”³ Furthermore, “Immense difficulties might lie in the way of the establishment of a League of Nations, but it would be mean and cowardly to shrink from them, and he hoped the civilised world would take this problem seriously in hand and see it through.”¹

Turning now to the administrative head of the University, Sir William Turner (1832-1916) was selected by the Senatus to be Principal and Vice-Chancellor in 1903. Turner had been Dean of the Medical Faculty between 1878 and 1881, and at various times also held the posts of President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, the Anatomical Society of Great Britain and Ireland, the British Association, and the General Medical Council. He was widely recognised as one of the foremost anatomists in Great Britain during the late Victorian period, and gained a knighthood in 1886.

Like Arthur Balfour Sir William Turner fully endorsed the biological and social

¹ The Scotsman 8 July 1915 p 8

² The Scotsman 8 July 1915 p 8

³ Ibid. 11 January 1918 p 5

theory of Darwinism soon after it emerged in the 1860s, as his biographer S. Sturdy pointed out. “He was an early convert to the theory of evolution, which he adopted both as an explanation of adaptation and as a means of tracing the taxonomic development of anatomical function.”² Furthermore, “In the course of this work Charles Darwin approached him for examples to illustrate The Descent of Man...The work for which Turner was best known related to the classification and evolutionary genealogy of human races.”³ Sturdy concluded, “His efforts established him as one of the main architects and advocates of the biological conception of distinct human races.”²

Indeed during the 1850s Sir William Turner had worked as a demonstrator under Professor John Goodsir in the university’s Anatomy Department, and Goodsir was in turn a pupil of Dr Robert Knox. As mentioned in the introduction Knox had produced the seminal text The Races of Man, in 1850 which argued that “In history, race is everything.”⁴ In any case William Turner’s son Arthur Logan Turner pointed out that, “Turner directed his studies to the physical side of anthropology. As an anatomist and biologist...he worked to correct, to add to and complete, so far as his material permitted him, the classification of human races upon a physical basis.”³

Furthermore, “His museum, founded by Munro and Goodsir...provided him with skulls representing all the races of the world, while further very valuable material was obtained from the staff of H.M.S. Challenger, on her return from a voyage of

¹ The Scotsman 11 January 1918 p 5

² Matthew H. C. G. and Harrison, Brian (eds.) Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. From the Earliest Times to the Year 2000 Volume 55 Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004 p 684

² Ibid.

³ Turner, Arthur Logan, Sir William Turner : a chapter in medical history Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1919 p 205

⁴ Knox, Robert, The Races of Men. A Fragment London: Henry Renshaw, 1850 p 2

scientific research and discovery round the world.”¹ As a consequence, “The Craniological Department, the ‘Golgotha’ of the Museum [the Anatomical Museum of the University of Edinburgh] thus came to be one of the finest in the country, containing no fewer than 1700 skulls representative of all the races of mankind inhabiting the globe.”²

After the outbreak of war in August 1914 the Principal of Edinburgh University rallied his institution to the national cause with great vigour. Shortly after the onset of hostilities the Secretary of War Lord Kitchener was selected to be Lord Rector, and as The Student reported, “Sir William Turner then congratulated the students upon the appointment...The students of Edinburgh had a special responsibility placed upon them in their choice of Lord Rector at this time, for there was no University in the British Isles which so fully represented the feelings of the Empire on such an occasion.”³ Furthermore, “By electing Lord Kitchener they had expressed the will of the Empire as to the type of man who ought to represent them under such circumstances.”⁴

At the first wartime graduation ceremony held in the McEwan Hall in July 1915 the Principal stated that, “A powerful nation with which we have been for more than a century and a half in friendly communion, and with whose Royal Family ours is united by ties of blood, has expressed in terms of hate its sentiments and intentions towards us.”¹ Furthermore, “A colossal vanity has enfeebled their minds and caused them to believe and say that they are the source and centre of intellectual thought and

¹ Turner, Arthur Logan, Sir William Turner : a chapter in medical history Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1919 p 206

² Ibid., p 207

³ The Student 26 November 1914 p 5

⁴ Ibid.

effort, and that other nations must be subservient to them...their methods of warfare are brutal, and are as cruel as those practised by the untutored savage.”² Sir William concluded, “We could not sit quiet with folded hands. We are not a decadent people. The national sense that our intellectual freedom and liberty of action must be preserved at all costs has become the creed of the British Empire. Scotland, this city, and the University resolved to play their part.”³

During another graduation in 1915 the Principal again strongly encouraged military enrolment among University members, as reported in The Scotsman. Sir William pointed out that, “He observed from the half-concealed uniforms under academic robes that some of them had already made their choice. They were going to serve their country, and in doing so they were merely following the example of those who graduated in the course of the summer.”⁴ Furthermore, “The academic youth of Great Britain...had not forgotten that they had a voice in the affairs of their country, and that they must show themselves thoroughly equal to looking at their lives and themselves as patriots belonging to a great country...which had brought us into the very highest place among the nations, and which they in their turn must help to preserve.”⁵

Sir William Turner died the following year and was succeeded as Principal by Sir James Alfred Ewing (1855-1935). Ewing was another Edinburgh University graduate, this time in the field of Engineering, and after a successful academic career at both Dundee and Cambridge Universities he was awarded the newly created post

¹ Turner, Sir William Turner p 459

² Ibid.

³ Turner, Sir William Turner, pp 459-460

⁴ The Scotsman 16 October 1915 p 12

⁵ Ibid.

of Director of Naval Education in 1903. Sir James was also a member of the Ordinance Board between 1906 and 1908, and as such directly involved in the Dreadnought building programme which was a central aspect of the pre-war armaments race with Germany.

After the outbreak of hostilities Ewing set up and directed the Naval Intelligence Unit in 'Room 40' of the old Admiralty buildings. Under his supervision this body succeeded in deciphering a German Navy signal book captured in 1914, which in turn allowed the British military authorities to keep a close track of German naval movements throughout the war. In early 1917 Ewing's intelligence unit also intercepted the Zimmermann Telegram. This document related to a military intrigue between Germany and Mexico against the United States, and its capture and revelation to the American government helped bring that country into the war on the British side. For obvious reasons details of all these activities were kept a closely guarded secret until after the conclusion of hostilities.

Sir James attempted to combine two occupations for a while then resigned from the Admiralty in 1917 to take up his university post full time. Perhaps not surprisingly the new Principal maintained the staunchly militaristic and patriotic stance of his predecessor. In late 1916 Sir James attended a United Free Church Convention in Edinburgh and The Scotsman reported him as arguing that before the war, "There was reason to fear that they were a decadent race. Man seemed for the most part to have forgotten that he was made in the image of God."¹ However, "Then came the great awakening....They were fighting not merely for the independence of their nation and for the independence of smaller nationalities, but to uphold the cause

of righteousness against the power of evil.”² Sir James concluded, “It was in that conviction that they waged a holy war.”³

During the same visit to Edinburgh the new Principal inspected the University Officers’ Training Corps., and it was reported in the newspaper that, “An exhibition of physical drill was given by members of the artillery and infantry units, who also showed their skill, alacrity, and keenness in their own special branches of work, the bayonet exercises and the drill of the gun teams being performed in a smart and efficient manner. The stretcher drill by a squad from the medical unit was equally impressive.”⁴

After these displays the Principal gave a speech in which he claimed that he was very sorry there had been no military training units when he had attended university, not only because of “the physical advantage gained from the drills; [but also] the moral advantage, the advantage of discipline and obedience.”⁵ He then praised the Corps for its wholehearted response to the national emergency pointing out that, “From their own contingent in Edinburgh there were nearly 900 supplied immediately in that way, and since then many hundreds had followed.” Sir James concluded with a call to even greater effort, accompanied by the same sort of religious invocation as he had given at the Free Church meeting covered above. “Far heavier sacrifices would be required of the people than they had yet had to make. What the members of the Officers’ Training Corps were answering was nothing less

¹ The Scotsman 7 December 1916 p 9

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ The Scotsman 11 December 1916 p 51

⁵ Ibid.

than the call of God. Might He keep them single-minded and give them strength.”¹

In November 1917 the University awarded an honorary degree to the United States Ambassador to the United Kingdom, the Hon. Walter Hines Page. Though unable to publicly reveal his own crucial role in America’s entrance into the war Sir James did make his pleasure at this recent turn of events clear. The Scotsman reported him as stating that, “Three years ago their youths went forth to fight for those ideals of freedom and very righteousness which he and they both admired. They rejoiced that now the youth of America was taking its place beside the youth of Scotland, of England, of the great Dominions in this titanic struggle.”² Furthermore, “It would have been a grievous calamity if she had stood aloof in the face of such a moral issue. Those who knew the difficulties which faced her rulers waited in patient hope for the hour when she should take a place worthy of her great destiny.”³

Towards the end of the war the Prime Minister David Lloyd George was also granted an honorary doctorate by the University. On this occasion the Principal claimed that, “In the Prime Minister they hailed a resolute leader, a representative and spokesman of the nation's unconquerable soul.”⁴ He also compared Lloyd George to his namesake in the Old Testament, pointing out that, “The earlier David also came to wield the highest authority in the State. One thought of that early David as the Hebrew prototype of the Celt - Celtic in fire, Celtic in imagination, Celtic in charm, and Celtic in his enjoyment of battle.”⁵

¹ The Scotsman, 9 December 1916

¹ Ibid 3 November 1917 p 9

¹ Ibid 9 December 1916

² Ibid 3 November 1917 p 9

³ Ibid.

⁴ The Scotsman 25 May 1918 p 6

⁵ Ibid.

Moving on to the academic community at Edinburgh University, the first thing to note is that whilst there was universal general support for Britain's military efforts, there were also a few strong disagreements over specific war-related issues. For example a series of discussions on the topic of student conscription was held by the Senatus in 1915, and at one of these meetings the Dean of the Medical Faculty, Professor H. Harvey Littlejohn (1862-1927) moved that, “‘All Medical Students eligible for Military Service other than those of the Fourth and Fifth years be recommended to join His Majesty's Forces; and that the University, as soon as possible, take steps to obtain permission from the War Office for those students to continue their studies until there is urgent need of their services by the State.’”¹

Sir Richard Lodge (1855-1936), Professor of History and Dean of the Faculty of Arts, and the Dean of the Divinity Faculty Professor William P. Paterson (1860-1939) then moved an amendment to the resolution requesting, “‘That no concession be asked for any students other than (*if necessary* [original italics]) Third Year Medical Students.’ After considerable discussion this amendment was put, ‘For or Against,’ and 14 voted for it and 12 against.”²

Furthermore in July 1917 Professor Arthur Berriedale Keith (1869-1941), holder of the Chair of Sanskrit and Comparative Philology moved a Senatus resolution,

That in the opinion of the Senatus Academicus it is contrary to public policy that any person should be appointed to an office in the University, who, not being a natural-born British subject, is, or at any time has been, a subject of any sovereign between whom His Majesty the King a state of war has existed at any period subsequent to 4th August 1914: That this resolution be transmitted by the

¹ University of Edinburgh Senatus Academicus. Printed Minutes Volume I Oct. 1913 to July 1917 pp 325-326.

² Ibid.

Secretary of Senatus to the various authorities by whom candidates are selected for appointment to University offices, and shall be communicated to the press.¹

This draconian motion was defeated by the more substantial margin of sixteen votes to six. In any case these disagreements were very much the exception to the rule, and the memorandum to the Prime Minister in 1915 calling for a more vigorous and united national war effort cited at the opening of the chapter was first proposed in the Senatus without dissent. “The Senatus are of opinion that the time has come for the Government to organise fully the national resources for the better prosecution of the war, and that it be remitted to a Committee to prepare and forward to the Prime Minister a Memorial in the name of the Senatus Academicus.”²

Looking at individual members of the teaching staff, the Dean of the Medical Faculty and holder of the Chair of Forensic Medicine mentioned above, Professor H. Littlejohn, was both a member of the Military Education Committee³ and commander of the Medical Unit of the University’s Officers’ Training Corps. At the outset of the war Littlejohn had put forward another motion to the Senatus, ““That a vote of cordial and appreciative thanks be accorded to Captain Johnstone and the Officers Commanding the various Units of the Edinburgh University Officers’ Training Corps, and also to Captain Bell, the Acting Adjutant, for the work these

¹ University of Edinburgh Senatus Academicus. Printed Minutes Volume I Oct. 1913 to July 1917 pp 325-326.5 July 1917 p 558

² Ibid.3 June 1915 pp 261-262

³ This Senatus Committee supervised the Officers’ Training Corps and Military Education curriculum, liaised with the War Office, and generally administered military-related affairs at the University. As well as Professor Littlejohn, its membership during the period 1912-18 included Professor Sir Thomas Hudson Beare (Convenor), Professor Sir Richard Lodge, Professor Sir Ludovic J. Grant, Captain H.M. Johnstone (OTC Adjutant) and the officers commanding the four OTC Units: Infantry, Engineer, Artillery and Medical.

Officers have accomplished since the outbreak of the War.’”¹ This proposal was passed unanimously.

James Mackintosh (1858-1944) was Professor of Civil Law and Dean of the Law Faculty throughout the period at hand, and in the latter capacity officiated at most of the honorary LLD laureation ceremonies. After the introduction by the Principal quoted above Professor Mackinnon greeted the American envoy at his 1917 capping with, “The dominant idea in our minds to-day is the momentous fact that we can now salute the American Ambassador and the great people he represents as our comrades in arms in this gigantic struggle for freedom and good faith.”²

Furthermore, “The psychologists of Potsdam, weighing the soul of the United States in their own sordid scales, staked their all on the desperate gamble that nothing high or heroic could come out of Washington.”³ The Professor of Law continued, “They have had their answer in the President’s historic message to Congress which still rings through the world, the most scathing indictment of Prussian tyranny and duplicity, and the sternest denunciation of its approaching doom that has ever been penned.” He concluded, “We welcome American participation in the war because it conjures up the fair vision of the future when the bond of common effort and common sacrifice for high and unselfish ends shall unite the two great branches of the English-speaking race in an indissoluble league, pledged to secure the blessings

¹ University of Edinburgh Senatus Academicus. Printed Minutes Volume Oct. 1913 to July 1917 8 October 1914 p145

¹ Edinburgh University Laureation Addresses LLD His Excellency the Hon. Walter Hines 2 November 1917

¹ Ibid.

¹ University of Edinburgh Senatus Academicus. Printed Minutes Volume Oct. 1913 to July 1917 8 October 1914 p145

² Edinburgh University Laureation Addresses LLD His Excellency the Hon. Walter Hines 2 November 1917

³ Ibid.

of peace and tranquillity to a war-wearied world. It is now my privilege to ask you on behalf of the Senatus to confer the degree of Doctor of Laws on our honoured guest.”¹

At the same ceremony the Prime Minister of New Zealand, The Right Hon. William Ferguson Massey, was also awarded an honorary degree. In his introductory comments Professor Mackintosh stated that, “The flower of our undergraduates have gone to fight their country’s battles with the unquenchable ardour of youth, and we, who remain behind, can but wish them a safe and speedy return, crowned with the laurels of victory.”² Furthermore, “The devoted patriotism of leaders like these [of Australia and New Zealand], and the magnificent loyalty of the vast territories they represent, are the very strength and stay of our Empire, as they are the envy and despair of its jealous and malignant foes, who now realise too late that their insolent and premeditated aggression has done more for the consolidation of the Imperial fabric than a cycle of peace could achieve.”³

Sir Thomas Hudson Beare (1859-1940) was Professor of Engineering and Dean of the Faculty of Science, Convenor of the Military Education Committee, and the Senatus representative on the Territorial Force Association of the County of Edinburgh. Sir Thomas also set up and supervised a scheme of training courses for students who wished to obtain part-time and vacation employment in the munitions industry, and this will be looked at in greater detail in the next chapter.

Alongside these activities the Dean of the Science Faculty both helped set up and

¹ Edinburgh University Laureation Addresses LLD His Excellency the Hon. Walter Hines 2 November 1917

² Edinburgh University Laureation Addresses The Right Hon. William Ferguson Massey, Prime Minister of New Zealand 2 November 1917

³ Ibid.

participated in a series of lectures to troops at the front first proposed by the Senatus in late 1915. "The Senatus resolved to remit to a Committee to consider whether the University of Edinburgh should participate in the scheme by arranging a course of lectures on subjects of Imperial interest or otherwise, and appointed the following as their Committee to deal with the matter - Professor Berriedale Keith (Convenor), Professors Lodge, Mackinnon, Lorrain Smith, Seth, Hudson Beare, Wallace, Sir L. Grant."¹ In February 1917 the Senatus noted that, "'Professor Hudson Beare asks for and received leave of absence for three weeks to enable him to lecture in France."²

Later in the same year Professor Beare was a member of an official delegation from Edinburgh invited to spend a week in the British zone of operations in France and Flanders by the Commander-in-Chief, Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig. The Scotsman reported that the party, which included the Lord Provost and City Treasurer as well as Professor Hudson Beare, visited, "a well-known city which has suffered ruination at the hands of the enemy."³ Furthermore, "The ruthlessness and. savagery which has caused much destruction, the Edinburgh representatives declare, must be stamped out of the world for over. Nothing can explain or condone or palliate such wanton destruction. It is an outrage upon humanity."⁴ On the other hand, the article continues, "The British soldier, the members of the party testify, is a bigger man than he knows himself to be. He seems to do everything as a matter of course, without any boasting or vain-glory or setting himself up as being a hero or doing anything exceptional. And this remark is true of the highest command down to the humblest

¹ University of Edinburgh Senatus Academicus. Printed Minutes Volume I Oct. 1913 to July 1917 7 October 1915 pp 296-297

² Ibid. 1 February 1917 p 506

³ The Scotsman 6 December 1917 p 6

⁴ Ibid.

private in the ranks.”¹

Sir Richard Lodge, Professor of History and Dean of the Arts Faculty, was one of the most prominent Edinburgh University academics of his day. As his biographer Geoffrey Best pointed out, “As dean of the faculty of arts from 1911 to 1924, in years when professors and *a fortiori* deans normally enjoyed powers much larger than today, he exercised near-regal authority.”² Furthermore, “Above all he excelled in the art of lecturing...His impressive presence no doubt was a help: he was over six feet tall, strong-looking, with piercing blue eyes, a rather ferocious Kitchener-Kipling moustache, and a good voice.” In any case this commanding figure also presented lectures to front line troops, this time as part of a scheme involving university personnel from across Britain and set up as an extension of a Y.M.C.A. educational project.

Sir Richard first went out to France in 1917, and The Scotsman reported that the topics he presented during his lecture series of the following year included ‘The Meaning of Nationality’, ‘The Union of Germany and the Union of Italy’, ‘Nelson’ and ‘The Problem of Imperial Reconstruction’. Furthermore, “The lectures were delivered either to mixed audiences of officers and men in Y.M.C.A. huts or at training schools to selected officers and N.C.O.’s. In both cases the halls where they were delivered were always full, and in some cases many could not obtain admission. The Colonial men especially seemed to be greatly interested and anxious to learn

¹ The Scotsman 6 December 1917 p 6

² Matthew H. C. G. and Harrison, Brian (eds) Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. From the Earliest Times to the Year 2000 Volume 34 Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004 p 283

² The Scotsman 16 January 1918 p 4

² Ibid.

about European history.”¹ Professor Lodge observed that he did not know, “Which was the more serious impediment to my lectures, the cannonading that went on all the time, or the continuous coughing that came from my audiences...He understands he is the first war lecturer to address an audience in that historic centre of battle.”²

Sir Richard Lodge was in fact one of the most politically active University academics both during and before the war. Geoffrey Best explained that, “The colour of his politics showed in his active support for the Navy League, the National Service League, and the Liberal League, the Rosebery-ite right-wing of the Liberal Party.”³ His daughter Margaret Lodge further commented, “He was one of the first of the University Imperialists. It was...largely owing to his initiative that a new Lectureship in Colonial and Indian History was established in Edinburgh [in 1912].” Furthermore, “In another direction Professor Lodge showed his interest in Great Britain’s Imperial mission, by his strong support for the Navy League, on whose behalf he delivered many lectures on naval history and the political consequences of sea-power.”¹

Both the National Service and Navy Leagues were among the many campaigning organisations set up in Britain before World War One with the objective of maintaining or strengthening the country’s military defences. Professor Lodge chaired a meeting of the Edinburgh branch of the Navy League in June 1914 at which he pointed out that, “What he took it that the Navy League existed for was in the first place to keep prominently before the Government and Legislature of the country the

¹ The Scotsman 16 January 1918 p 4

² Ibid.

³ Matthew H. C. G. and Harrison, Brian (eds) Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. From the Earliest Times to the Year 2000 Volume 34 Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004 p 283

needs and problems of the Navy.”² Furthermore, “The other reason...and essential purpose of the League, was to bring home to the public, sometimes ignorant, still more often thoughtless, the imperative necessity to this country, above all other countries, of naval defence and naval power (Applause).”³

During the war itself Lodge encouraged public attendances at his university and other lectures which included topics such as ‘The Balance of Power’, ‘British Naval Ascendancy’, and ‘The Future of the British Empire’. Whilst fundamentally patriotic and imperialistic, Professor Lodge’s rhetoric and tone was markedly more measured and less jingoistic than that commonly used during the war years. For example, in a talk of April 1915 held under the auspices of the Workers’ Education Association and Outlook Tower organisation entitled ‘Problems of Nationality’ Lodge argued that, “It was impossible to see a settlement based on nationality and race alone, although that might count for a great deal. For instance, they could not give Schleswig, to Denmark without endangering Germany's control of the Kiel Canal.”⁴

Professor Lodge also contributed an essay entitled ‘Germany and Prussia. A Historical Sketch’ to a compilation of works by Edinburgh University academics published in 1915 entitled German Culture: The Contribution of the Germans to Knowledge. Though again relatively moderate in its contents this piece did occasionally lapse into the nationalistic propaganda common during the war years. For example Sir Richard claimed that, “This conception of a sort of divine mission has become an obsession among a people [the Germans] whose sense of humour has

¹ Lodge, Margaret, Sir Richard Lodge. A biography Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1946, pp 125-126

² The Scotsman 18 June 1914 p 9

³ Ibid.

⁴ The Scotsman 27 March 1915 p 13

been dulled by extravagant self-esteem.”¹ Furthermore, “In spite of German claims to ethical and intellectual superiority, it is doubtful whether the world has any deep-seated desire to derive the blessings of civilisation from a state which has given such evidence of superior morality as is afforded by the deliberate assertion of the right of a great power to disregard treaty obligations, to trample upon a weaker neighbour whom it was pledged to defend, and to wage war with a cynical brutality which mankind has been struggling for generations to soften.”²

German Culture was edited and compiled by the next Edinburgh University Dean to be looked at. William P. Paterson (1860-1939) was both Professor of Divinity at Edinburgh and the Domestic Chaplain to the King in Scotland, and was the head of the Divinity Faculty between 1912 and 1928. Paterson also took an extremely firm line on the conflict, as the historian David Ferguson pointed out. “At the outbreak of war in 1914, Paterson’s life and career entered their most critical phase...A strong supporter of the war effort, Paterson argued that Britain and her allies had been subjected to German aggression which required resistance by force.” Furthermore, “The struggle was typically cast in religious terms, by which the resurgent paganism within German culture faced the truer Christian spirit of the British empire.”

Professor Paterson introduced the German Culture compilation with, “Under present conditions, when the diffusion of the German type of civilisation might be thought to be an end that sanctifies almost any iniquity as a means, it is not surprising that the German claim of pre-eminence should have called forth a storm of

¹ Patterson, W.P (ed.), German culture : the contribution of the Germans to knowledge, literature, art, and life London: T.C. and E.C. Jack, 1915, p 32

² Patterson, W.P (ed.), German culture p 33

indignation and derision.”¹ His wartime sermons were also published, and in one of these talks he claimed direct divine assistance for the British war effort. Paterson argued that, “The chiefest [*sic.*] maxim of the prophets is that God is moved to punish a nation for flagrant acts of injustice and inhumanity...it does not seem open to doubt that Germany’s conduct of the war had fallen below the irreducible minimum demanded by modern decency and humanity.” Furthermore, “Had she been victorious at the Battle of the Marne, it would probably have been decisive; and when we have heard all that has been told of the circumstances of that battle, we may well feel that we can only explain the event on the supposition that Providence on that day helped the weaker things to confound those which were mightier.”²

Like many academics of the late-Victorian and Edwardian eras Professor Paterson had in fact studied for a period in Germany, in this case at the universities of Leipzig, Erlangen and Berlin between 1883 and 1885. In October 1917 the Divinity Dean presented an address to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland’s ‘Commission on the War’ and The Scotsman reported that, “Professor W. P. Paterson, Edinburgh University, spoke on the ‘Social and Moral Issues of the War’, and in doing so said from his experience gained by residence in Germany there existed a vindictiveness and jealousy towards us, and he had not in his mind a shadow of doubt that this war was a premeditated crime.”³ Furthermore, “Germany had resolved on their crime with a fixed purpose, and having been caught in the toils

¹ Ibid., p vi

¹ Ibid., pp 252-254

¹ The Scotsman 30 October 1917 p 8

² W. P. Paterson, In the Day Of the Ordeal : Sermons Edinburgh : T. & T. Clark, 1917 pp 252-254

³ The Scotsman 30 October 1917 p 8

as a burglar they ought to be treated as such.”¹

Professor Paterson’s strong feelings on these matters can presumably be at least partially explained by the fact that two of his sons were killed in action, at Neuve Chapelle in March 1915 and Delville Wood the following year.

Looking briefly to the Faculty of Music, the world-renowned pianist and orchestral composer Donald F. Tovey accepted the Chair and Deanship of this relatively small department shortly before war broke out in 1914. The following year Professor Tovey contributed an essay to the German Culture collection, and his piece was relatively free from the anti-German bias so prevalent at the time.

Tovey stated that “It is not surprising that the one nation which has produced the main bulk of classical music should also produce the greatest interpreters thereof. German players, singers, and conductors owe their eminence to the qualities history has shown in German composers.” He continued, “It is idle to inquire whether their native talent is equal to that of other races; the most wonderful native talent in the world would be but a part of the force of character which the best type of German musician has always instinctively devoted to the highest purpose of his art.”²

Turning then from the Deans to other prominent academics at Edinburgh University, Sir Ludovic J. Grant (1862-1936) was Professor of Public Law, himself a former Dean of the Law Faculty, and Secretary of the University from 1918-1922. He also offered up one of the strongest denunciations of Germany of all the university staff members during the war. The Scotsman reported that at his opening lecture of the Public Law course for the 1915-1916 session Professor Grant claimed that the

¹ The Scotsman 30 October 1917 p 8

² Paterson, W.P (ed.), German culture p 300

conflict would end with “The complete discomfiture of the Kaiser's myrmidons.”¹ Furthermore, “The German people as a whole were open to charges of inhumanity and savagery, and he found no reason for the belief that the Germans were the victims of a temporary moral aberration wholly out of keeping with the fundamental Teutonic character.”²

Professor Grant further claimed that, “The only really satisfactory conclusion to the war looking to the interests of the international society as a whole, and to the future of civilisation, and having regard to the abysmal depths of depravity in which the Germans were wallowing, would be the complete annihilation of this reptilian race.”³ However, “though annihilation would be the ideal method of dealing with the German difficulty, though it was the method which the Germans themselves would most assuredly employ in the converse case”⁴, the Professor concluded that such a mass extermination could not in practice be carried out; but this was only because such a policy would be “abhorrent to Germany's magnanimous foes...and though it was found possible to put a city-state to the sword, it was not possible to put a vast Empire to the sword.”⁵ Professor Grant concluded his lecture by arguing that, “It would certainly be no surprising thing if for many generations to come Germany were to be to a great extent ostracised by many of its neighbours.”¹

Rev. Dr. John Kelman (1864-1929) was both Chaplain of the Edinburgh University Officers' Training Corps and unofficial Chaplain for the University as a whole during this period. Like Professor Lodge he was also a strong supporter of the

¹ The Scotsman 16 October 1915 p 12

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

pre-war movement for increased national military preparedness. The Scotsman covered a meeting of the National Service League in Edinburgh's United Free Assembly Hall in December 1913 at which Dr Kelman claimed that Field-Marshal Lord Roberts, President of the League, "Had grown old in the service of his country; and such service to his country, who certainly would be in history one of Britain's great men, great patriots, and great soldiers."²

Furthermore, "The greatest danger threatening this nation or any nation would never be a foreign danger, it would be the danger of degeneracy going on from within."³ Kelman then argued that national conscription was, "Surely a thing to appeal to all men to come into line...drawing out the manhood of them and helping them physically, mentally, and morally. Might it not be strength to our national character and physique; might it not put iron into our blood? (Applause)."⁴

During the war itself Rev. Dr. Kelman presented the main sermon at a memorial service for the University's war dead held in St. Giles Cathedral in 1915. As The Student reported he argued that, "What mother among you would not rather have her son dead and a poor man upon the field of honour, than a living millionaire who had failed his country in the hour of her mortal need?"⁵ Furthermore, "No career could be more gloriously complete than theirs...The very love of the nation, the existence of the British Empire, was in imminent danger when they flung themselves into the breach....They have enriched the national life by their dying, more than even the

¹ The Scotsman 16 October 1915 p 12

² Ibid. 5 December 1913 p 10

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ The Student, 16 December 1915 p 9

noblest of them could have enriched it had he lived.”¹

The O.T.C. Chaplain continued, “In these brothers of ours who have died for us, the nation has vindicated her good name before the world. We were accused of self-indulgence and of softness, of decadence hastening downward to decay. The accusations were not altogether groundless.”² Dr Kelman concluded, “But now Great Britain has found herself again. She has made good her claim to real greatness. By their deaths, these men have let loose spiritual forces that shall come mightily upon the race... ‘They have lit such a candle, not in England alone, but in the world, as, by God’s grace, shall never be put out.’”³

Hugh R. Mackintosh (1870-1936) was Professor of Systematic Theology during this period, and also took a robust approach to the war and its ideological issues. The Scotsman reported that at his opening lecture of the 1914-1915 session Rev. Professor Mackinnon claimed that, “All of them there gave thanks that the mind of the whole Empire with respect to this stupendous conflict - its justice, its chivalry, its necessity as a defence against military arrogance and excess - had been declared with so impressive unanimity.”⁴ Furthermore, “The call to vindicate public righteousness and to protect our shores they were able to recognise quite definitely as the call of God, to whose overruling wisdom they humbly and believingly committed the issue.”⁵

The final theological academic to be looked at, William Alexander Curtis (1876-1961) was professor of Biblical Criticism and Biblical Antiquities during this period.

¹ The Student, 16 December 1915 p 9

² Ibid., 16 December 1915 p 9

³ Ibid.

⁴ The Scotsman 8 October 1914 p 6

⁵ Ibid.

Professor Curtis in fact adopted a relatively moderate and reflective stance in at least one speech given during the war. The Scotsman reported that during a sermon in St. Giles Cathedral following the graduation ceremony of July 1915 Rev. Curtis asked, “When...would the jealous nations bring their fears and hates and rivalries and dreams of empire to the impartial tribunal of the searching judgment of Jesus Christ? When would the sundered Churches gather at His pierced feet to submit their contentions to the decisions of His gentle spirit and learn of Him?”¹

Arthur Berriedale Keith (1879-1944) was one of the most prominent public figures at Edinburgh University during the war. Keith possessed first class degrees from both Edinburgh and Oxford Universities, and in 1901 achieved the highest score ever recorded in the Civil Service entrance examination. During his subsequent period of employment at the Colonial Office he was variously a representative at the Colonial Navigation Conference (1907), Clerk at the Imperial Conference (1907), Joint-Secretary to the Imperial Copyright Conference (1910), Junior Assistant Secretary to the Imperial Conference (1911) and the Private Secretary to Sir John Anderson, the permanent Under-Secretary of State at the Dominions Department of the Colonial Office between 1912 and 1914. These combined qualifications and experiences gained Berriedale Keith the reputation as the foremost world-wide expert on British constitutional and imperial legal issues of his era, and he was consulted as such by academics, politicians, and heads of state. In 1914 Keith accepted the chair of Sanskrit and Comparative Philology at Edinburgh University, but continued to play an extremely active part in external political and constitutional affairs.

Like Sir Richard Lodge Professor Keith upheld Liberal-Imperialist positions, and

¹ The Scotsman 9 July 1915 p 5

in the pre-war period agreed about the need for powerful naval forces to protect the British Empire. In June 1914 he entered into correspondence with the constitutional legal expert Sir A. Dicey, with the latter claiming that, “All the ends which we desire to achieve in respect of the Empire may be thus summed up: A huge fleet and possibly also additional armies supported by the resources of the whole Empire.”¹ Berriedale Keith replied, “I agree with you in the importance of the maintenance of the Empire.”²

After the war broke out Professor Berriedale Keith fully supported the national and imperial military effort, for example in October 1914 he sent the following letter to Sir Edward Grey (1862-1933), the British Foreign Secretary. “Dear Sir Edward, I have your letter of the 28th ultimo, and I appreciate greatly your kindness in suggesting my name to the Secretary of State for the Colonies as a member of the Newfoundland War Contingent Association....It must be a source of gratification to you that Newfoundland should have responded so admirably in this crisis, and I have no doubt that the Newfoundland Contingent will prove themselves in every way worthy of their country and of the Empire.”³ Like Professor Lodge, however, Arthur Berriedale Keith’s statements throughout the conflict tended to be moderate and academic rather than overtly jingoistic.

Joseph Shield Nicholson (1850-1927) was another highly influential scholar working at Edinburgh University during the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries. He became Professor of Political Economy and Mercantile Law in 1880 at the relatively young age of twenty nine, and his work Elements of Political Economy

¹ The Papers and Correspondence of Arthur Berriedale Keith Gen 142 / 4 106a Letter 8 June 1914

² Ibid. Letter 17 June 1914

³ The Papers and Correspondence of Arthur Berriedale Keith Gen 103d

(1903) was recognised as the contemporary standard in the field. Furthermore as Professor Nicholson's biographer W. R. Scott pointed out, "His teachings and writings played a definite and important part in the formation of public opinion. On questions of imperial economic policy and of currency and banking he attained a position of exceptional authority."¹

Nicholson was a staunch proponent of the theories of the Eighteenth Century economist Adam Smith, and in particular attempted to show that Smith's ideas were commensurate with the national-imperialist outlook popular during his own period. In his pre-war text A Project of Empire Professor Nicholson claimed that, "But, in truth, Adam Smith took it for granted that in every country the idea of nationality was absolutely dominant."² He continued, "In discussing the general question of colonial policy [Smith] considers the case of possible abandonment safeguarded by adequate commercial treaties. He shows that this alternative has certain advantages, even from the point of view of national power and wealth. But the idea is dismissed as not even worthy of practical consideration."³ Nicholson concluded, "Here again it will be found that the standpoint is unquestionably nationalist and not cosmopolitan."⁴

The Professor of Political Economy also claimed that Adam Smith promoted the general merits of warfare in his Moral Sentiments in which, "The glory of war is introduced in the discussion on the character of virtue."⁵ Continuing on this theme Nicholson claimed that, "Adam Smith compares the relative merits of the statesman

¹ Matthew H. C. G. and Harrison, Brian (eds) Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. From the Earliest Times to the Year 2000 Volume 40 Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004 p 825

² Nicholson, Joseph Shield, A Project of Empire : A Critical Study of the Economics of Imperialism, with Special Reference to the Ideas of Adam Smith London : Macmillan, 1909 p 22.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Nicholson, A Project of Empire p 22

⁵ Nicholson, A Project of Empire p 17

who is at the head of one of the great political parties with the soldier who has the conduct of a great national war....‘The hero who serves his country successfully in foreign war gratifies the wishes of the whole nation, and is on that account the object of universal gratitude and admiration.’”¹

Professor Nicholson applied these general theories directly to the pre-war international situation about which he claimed that, “The most pressing political question of the day is whether the time has not arrived when, especially from the point of view of defence, the potentialities of empire must be turned into actualities.”² He continued, “To the world at large the extension of the *Pax Britannica* is no doubt an immense boon, but, if opportunity offered, in the present as in the past, the nations of the world would share in the partition of the British possessions as readily as in the partition of China.”³ Nicholson concluded, “If our empire is to be preserved under modern conditions, the power of the sea must be upheld, not merely by the United Kingdom but by the United Empire. That is the first essential requisite; and if this is attained the way is prepared for a closer union for other political and social requirements.”⁴

As well as these general imperialistic points A Project of Empire specifically endorsed the widespread contemporary calls for an economic, commercial and armaments race with Germany. Professor Nicholson argued that, “By retaliation Adam Smith means fiscal war...Being war it must be carried on for success by the methods of war. A policy of pin-pricks is not war, and may not even lead to war.”⁵

¹ *Ibid.*, p 236

² *Ibid.*, p 236

² *Ibid.*, p 236

⁴ *Ibid.*, p 237

⁵ Nicholson, A Project of Empire pp 169-170

Furthermore, “If, under present condition, England resolves to adopt the method of retaliation, it should...strike hard at the most vulnerable part of the enemy’s trade. Real retaliation would consist in inviting some particular country (say Germany) to take off or reduce objectionable duties, with the indication that if the invitation were declined this country would impose duties which would be intended to be injurious to German trade.”¹ Professor Nicholson concluded, “Such retaliation, to judge by the history of the past, would be more likely to end in heavier duties being imposed on us, and might eventually end in real war.”²

After the actual fighting with Germany broke out Nicholson campaigned heavily for the United States to enter the military struggle on the British side. In an article published in The Scotsman on 12 June 1915 entitled ‘The Neutrality of the U.S.’ Nicholson argued that, “There can be no question that the ideas at the basis of German military culture and hero worship are exactly the opposite of the great ideas under which the British Empire has grown up and been extended over so wide an area. And the key to the present argument is that it is precisely these same ideas which have dominated the growth of the United States.”³

In general the Professor of Political Economy adopted a vigorously patriotic and militaristic attitude to the struggle. In his work War Finance of 1917 he stated that, “Still less should the Government allow its hands to be weakened by undue deference to equality of sacrifice....We have been told that we failed at Suvla Bay for want of ruthlessness; our commanders were too busy measuring the sacrifices to be

¹ Ibid. p 236

² Nicholson, A Project of Empire p 236

³ The Scotsman 12 June 1915 p 9

incurred.”¹ Furthermore, “Far be it from us to accept the German teaching of the art of war: that success justifies any means whatever. But in a state of war we must be prepared to revise some of our ordinary rules of conduct, and try to discover what other rules are better fitted to achieve our real aims.” Nicholson concluded, “We are fighting, in the first place, for national liberty....In order to achieve this greater liberty, the lesser liberties of all kinds must give way.”²

Alexander W. Mair was appointed to the Chair of Greek at Edinburgh University in 1909. Though Professor Mair was not directly involved in the same sort of wartime propagandist activities as many of his university colleagues, he did compose a series of patriotic and eulogising poems two of which were published in The Student at the height of the conflict.

Lord Kitchener

I see a figure splendid and austere
Stand on the grey sea-board:
Her brows are bent in sorrow, but her hand
Clutches a flaming sword.
As one who waits an unreturning sail
Beneath the sullen skies,
She scans the barren fields of cruel foam with yearning eyes.
He will not come again: Britannia
In vain her vigil keeps:
Now let the foe beware the ghost of him
For whom Britannia weeps!
But yesterday our bulwark and our shield -
How 'neath the wandering wave,
His warfare o'er, the happy warrior sleeps,
As sleep the deathless brave.
I see a figure radiant and serene,
Her face toward the sun,
About her brows a Crown Imperial
Of victory greatly won.

¹ Nicholson, War Finance p 144

² Ibid. p 353

The sword is sheathed, the idle shield uphung,
The nations free from strife
To follow gentle peace who leads mankind
To larger, nobler life.
The bells ring out, the quays are gay,
Our ships at anchor ride,
Our war-worn legions seek their homes again
Amid our praise and pride,
And She who scanned that lonely Orkney shore -
Her eyes with tears are dim
As stooping from her throne she lays a wreath -
Her proudest wreath - for him.¹

In Memoriam

As one who long has dwelt in alien places
Comes to his home at last,
And mourns to miss the old and friendly faces
Known in the dear dead past,
So when to-day I face the old Quadrangle,
The old familiar Quad.,
I mourn the evil times that mar and mangle
All that is young and glad,
Here, as it were but yesterday, were thronging
Students from every clime,
Thinking the long, long thoughts of youth, and longing
To speed the feet of Time,
To-day there greet me only ghostly faces,
And only ghostly eyes
Greet me, and ghostly hands, and all the place is
A home of memories.

Far in an alien land ye sleep,
And under unfamiliar skies,
Who made, your plighted word to keep,
The last and utmost sacrifice.
O deathless dead! who did not die,
Save as Christ died upon the Cross,
Pro Patria, O mortui,
Salutamus vos mortuos!

And lo! I heard a voice from heaven crying,
'Know thou that these are they
Which out of tribulation came and sighing -

¹ The Student 16 June 1916 p 141

These in that white array,
They shall not hunger nor shall thirst assail them,
Nor sun shall vex with heat:
The Lamb of God, the Christ, shall never fail them,
But he shall guide their feet
Unto the living waters, and His rod shall
Be still their staff and stay
In holy and quiet places, and their God shall
Wipe every tear away.¹

The final academic to be covered in this chapter was also one of the most widely known and politically active members of the University throughout the period of the thesis. Charles Louis-Camille Sarolea (1870-1953) was born and educated in Belgium, also studied at Paris, Palermo and Naples, over the course of his life learnt nearly twenty languages, and by the age of twenty-two was private secretary to the former Belgian Prime Minister Walthère Frère-Orban. After turning down the chair of philosophy at Brussels University Sarolea accepted the post of head of the newly formed Department of French at Edinburgh in 1894, and was later granted the professorship when it was inaugurated in 1918.

Between 1901 and his death in 1953 Charles Sarolea held the position of Belgian Consul to Scotland. He was also Consul for the Congo Free State between 1903 and 1908, and in that role became involved in an early controversy, vigorously defending Belgium's rule of the colony from critics such as Roger Casement. The historian and biographer Samantha Johnson pointed out that, "In 'Les Belges au Congo' [1899] he [Sarolea] wrote of the civilising role that Europeans had to undertake in 'barbarous' Africa."¹

In general Sarolea held racially supremacist and derogatory views, for example he

¹ The Student 21 March 1917 p 7

compared Africans to monkeys, but Johnson also emphasised that in adopting such a position, “Sarolea was not out of kilter with the opinion held by most Europeans at the beginning of the twentieth century.”² Furthermore, “To many people, in spite of the ‘scramble’ and the increasing role in African affairs most European nations had taken from the 1870s onwards, the continent as a whole remained ‘darkest Africa’. The black man was indeed an untamed savage, with strange customs and eating habits.”³

In 1905 Dr Sarolea made the first of many trips to Russia, on this occasion primarily to visit the world-renowned novelist and spiritual teacher Leo Tolstoy. As Samantha Johnson put it, “Many individuals in the West were caught up in the image of the great Lev Tolstoy and his creed. From all over Europe a trail of pilgrims made their way to Russia in order to seek out this prophet. One of those who walked the well-trodden path to Yasanaya Polyana was Charles Sarolea.”⁴ Sarolea went on to produce a biography of Tolstoy in 1912, and was himself influenced by the Russian writer’s anti-modernist, peasant-eulogising, and to a lesser extent pacifistic viewpoints. As a consequence of this journey he also developed a deep affection for Russia which was to last for the rest of his life.

In 1912 Dr Sarolea set-up and edited the Everyman literary and political weekly journal. During this pre-war period Sarolea joined with other Roman Catholic contributors to his magazine such as Hilaire Belloc and G K Chesterton in their denunciations of Germany, at least partially because of the country’s Lutheran

¹ Johnson, Samantha T A good European and a sincere racist. The life and work of Professor Charles Sarolea 1870-1953 PhD Thesis, the University of Keele, 2001 p 51

² Ibid. p 52

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid. pp 115-116

religious basis. Sarolea also produced the highly successful polemical text The Anglo-German Problem in the same year as the launch of his new magazine. This work was among the many of the period warning about the imminent danger of a conflict between Britain and Germany, and to a large extent simply adopted the conventional nationalistic attitude to perceived German militarism and aggression.

For example Sarolea claimed that, “Whatever may be the cause of the state of mind of the Germans, they are certainly suffering just now from acute ‘megalomania.’ The abnormal self-conceit, the inflated national consciousness, express themselves in a thousand ways, some of which are naive and harmless, whilst others are grossly offensive.”¹ He continued, “Like the Kaiser, every German believes he is ‘the salt of the earth’ - ‘*Wir sind das Saltz der Erde.*’ Like Nietzsche, the modern German believes that the world must be ruled by a super-man, and that he is the super-man.”² By way of contrast Dr Sarolea argued that, “England to-day has returned to her ancient traditions. The British people have outgrown the bonds of a narrow nationalism....The British Empire has become a world-wide federation of free, self-governing communities, including many different religions, but bound together by the same political ideal.”³

The book did contain many internally contradictory elements, for example Dr Sarolea claimed that, “There may be extreme cases where outside interference is justified, as in the case of the colonization of a degraded race by a demonstrably superior race, as in the case of the domination of a white race over a coloured race.”¹ However he went on to state that, “The invariable verdict of universal history is

¹ Sarolea, Charles, The Anglo-German Problem Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1912 pp 58-59

² Ibid.

³ Sarolea, The Anglo-German Problem p 22

against...any from of aggressive imperialism, political or religious, imposing its rule in the name of a higher civilisation. The Roman Empire was destroyed by the very weapons which were used to subject inferior races.”² Throughout the work vigorous denunciations of German patriotism and the evils of nationalism in general sat side-by-side with equally vigorously nationalistic claims about British virtues.

In any case the impact of The Anglo-German Problem can be gleaned from a review in The New York Times after it was released in America in 1915. This piece claimed that, “Three years ago there was one man in Europe who had a political sight so clear that his words then written seem today uncanny in their wisdom.”³ Furthermore, “This man saw the present war; he saw that Belgium would be invaded by Germany; he saw that the Germans hated England with a profound and bitter hate; that German diplomatic blunders had placed that nation in almost complete isolation in the world.”⁴ The piece concluded, “The seer who thus saw is Dr. Charles Sarolea...Clear, sane, calm, logical, strong, such is Dr. Sarolea’s book, with its ‘rare perspicacity’ and ‘remarkable sense of political realities,’ in the words of King Albert’s appreciation of the work.”⁵

Perhaps not surprisingly Charles Sarolea viewed the war itself as a straightforward struggle between the forces of good and evil, and he embarked on a series of vigorously propagandist lectures across the country. Samantha Johnson pointed out that, “This was the period in which he was a well-known figure country-wide, and

¹ Ibid., p 190

² Ibid., p 195

³ Sarolea Collection, 183 New York Times 1915.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Sarolea Collection, 183 New York Times cutting 1915.

could command large audiences in a variety of venues.”¹ The Edinburgh Senatus itself sponsored a series of talks in the University, and at one of these entitled ‘Problems of Foreign Policy’ and delivered on 9 October 1917 Dr Sarolea argued that, “We understand the perversion of the German soul, its duplicity, its treachery, its servility, its brutality, but we do not understand the German virtues, or rather how it is that these virtues of the Germans, their self-sacrifices, their patriotism, their endurance, their patience, their long-suffering, how all these virtues have proved more terrible than their vices, because these virtues have been enlisted in the service of evil.”²

Dr Sarolea was initially positive about the Kerensky-led Russian Revolution of February 1917. However he was appalled by the Bolshevik seizure of power later in the same year and his responses to this event presaged views which would be increasingly maintained in the post-war period, as will be covered in a subsequent chapter. At another Edinburgh University sponsored lecture held in the United Free Church Assembly Hall and chaired by Sir Ludovic Grant in early November 1917 Sarolea commented, “What are we doing to counteract that omnipotent German propaganda? We have not yet awakened to what it means, as for instance was admitted by the Russian Government, an Austrian person was actually accepted as a member of the Soviet. We do not realise that literally an army, tens of thousands of German agents, German Jews, Polish Jews are flooding the country.”³

In conclusion. then, it is clear that in general both the officials and teaching staff at the University of Edinburgh upheld and promoted notably imperialistic, nationalistic

¹ Johnson, *A Good European and a Sincere Racist* p 81

² *Sar Coll / 184 Speech typescript* 9 October 1917

³ *Sar Coll / 185 Public Lectures, ‘The Russian Revolution’ In United Free Church* 7 November 1917

and militaristic positions both before and after the outbreak of hostilities with Germany in August 1914.

The University authorities also vigorously encouraged undergraduates to enlist in the armed forces, Officers' Training Corps, or engage in other war-related work where neither was possible. It is time now to turn to the outlooks and experiences of Edinburgh students during World War One.

Chapter 2. World War One: Students

All day and all night one hears the intermittent crack of the rifles and the whistle of the bullets, and the crash and roar of the guns. One lives through it, and gets accustomed to it, so that the jumpy feeling almost goes, and to be struck by a bullet actually comes as a surprise and a shock. Still these are the everyday occurrences of the war. But one can even go through big battles without fully realising at the time the awfulness of one's surroundings. During such times the snap and whistle of guns develop into an increasing rattle from the rifles and thunder from the guns. The air is filled with a hail of something like molten steel accompanied by the bursting of great thunder-bolts dealing death to all around. If one looks around from a momentary shelter, it is to see men shot down like ferreted rabbits; one may see them drop in hundreds and hardly feel it any more than one feels the death of shot rabbits.¹

Between August 1914 and November 1918 around seven thousand members of the University of Edinburgh took a direct part in Great Britain's worldwide military struggle with Germany and her allies. Nearly one thousand of these individuals were killed,² in other words an average of around twenty graduates or undergraduates died for every month of the entire four year period of World War One. An extremely large number of awards for gallantry were also obtained, including 5 Victoria Crosses, 175 Distinguished Service Orders and 705 Military Crosses.³

During the course of the conflict 3,217 students passed through the University Officers' Training Corps on their way to commissions and active service, this at a time when the total number of individuals eligible to join the unit only averaged around one thousand per session.⁴ The Corps in fact played a near dominant role in university life throughout the war with members of the Artillery, Engineering and Infantry units involved in 'intensive training' consisting of drills, lectures and

¹ The Student 3 February 1915 p 50 'The Front – Impressions of a Wounded Officer'

² University of Edinburgh Roll of Honour 1914-1919 Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1921. 944 casualties are listed in this commemorative book

³ The Student, 26th May 1921 p 189

⁴ See Table 2 below, p 73

exercises from 9.30 AM to 5.15 PM daily.¹

Table 1: Officers Training Corps Membership 1914-1918²

Unit / Session	Artillery	Engineers	Infantry	Medical	Total
1914-1915	298	95	383	209	985
1915-1916	310	19	167	238	734
1916-1917	366	10	158	170	704
1917-1918	392	76	157	169	794
TOTALS	1366	200	865	786	3217

During 1915 and 1916 the Officers' Training Corps also played host to a School of Instruction for external subalterns. As The Scotsman reported, "The Officers reside at two of the University halls of residence under the mess presidency of one of their instructing [O.T.C.] Officers...The daily programme of each group of Officers attending these courses, which lasts four weeks, consists of lectures and practical work both at the headquarters of the corps and in the country, together with three examinations on the work of the course."³ Overall this scheme involved the training of seven hundred and sixty artillery and infantry officers.

Those students unsuitable or ineligible to take a direct part in military activities were encouraged to engage in other war-related enterprises, such as a course of instruction in munitions manufacture established and run by the Engineering Department. The Student magazine promoted the project with, "We have pleasure in drawing attention to this important form of service to those unable, by age or

¹ The Student 28th May 1920 pp 36-38. A small number of OTC members did attempt to carry on their studies and these students were only obliged to train from 4.15 to 6.15 P.M. Monday to Friday and Saturday mornings.

² Ibid. 28 May 1920 p 36

³ The Scotsman 16 June 1915 p 8

otherwise, to carry a rifle, or who cannot in any other way serve the Empire.”¹ The article explained, “The hours of work are from 9 to 5 daily with an interval for lunch. The course of instruction consists of simple exercises involving the use of various turning tools, the preparation of large and small test bars in wrought iron, cast iron, and mild steel. Exercises on the lines of shell cases, screw cutting (Whitworth and square threads), along with the use of gauges.”² The Scotsman also covered this venture pointing out that, “Those who have been trained have no difficulty in getting work thereafter. These courses are under the direction of Professor Hudson Beare, and the supervision of Mr Wm. Gordon, his assistant.”³

A number of female students took part in this University armaments project, and in general a much higher percentage of women than usual were enrolled at the institution during the war.³ This was at least in part intended to fill in gaps in professions such as teaching and medicine caused by the absence of males, and the female undergraduates were active in war-related activities such as nursing, correspondence with front-line troops, and the preparation of food and clothing parcels for both soldiers and refugees.⁴

Early in 1915 the University Women’s Christian Union and Suffrage Societies set up a work-shop for local unemployed females to produce clothing for Belgian refugees, and later in the same session an Edinburgh University Women’s Help Association was established. The student paper encouraged participation in this organisation by pointing out that, “There never was a time of sterner reality and need for co-operation and help. Of the nation as a whole a great stupendous effort is

¹ The Student 10 March 1916 p 128

² Ibid. p 129

³ The Scotsman 18 December 1915 p 11

⁴ For a fuller account of the war-time roles of female student see Appendix 3

demand; we are privileged to find our share in this national demand. We appeal to every woman student to play the game, and to maintain as far as lies in her power the glorious tradition of our Alma Mater!”¹

The same article also advertised one of the many sales of goods organised by female students during the war, in this instance to raise funds for Belgian refugee children and the Red Cross. Some of the proceeds were also intended for the Scottish Women’s Hospitals established by the Edinburgh graduate Elsie Inglis, and a few senior female medical students took a direct part in the work of these front-line medical units. One such undergraduate recounted her experiences in the hospital at Kragujevatz, Serbia, in a letter sent to The Student. She commented, “We have only three operating tables, and lesser wounds are done as best we can on chairs...The men are very brave, yet everyone has his limit, and there is often a perfect pandemonium.”² Furthermore, “Another fifth year student and I, having a spare hour one day, went round to visit the 1st Reserve Hospital where we were shown round the fever block. The men lay in rows along the floor on little straw mattresses, sometimes two on one. They lay there practically uncared for, as there were no nurses to wash or tend them.”³

A University Red Cross Detachment was set up with Miss Jessie Stevenson as its Quartermaster, and in session 1915-1916 A. M. Cunningham became the first female Senior President of the Students’ Representative Council.

The relatively wholehearted nature of Edinburgh University student involvement in Britain’s martial efforts during World War One can be gleaned from some relevant statistics. For example as Table 2 below illustrates 62% of eligible Edinburgh

¹ The Student 16 December 1915 p 35

² Ibid. 17 March 1915 p 101

³ Ibid.

undergraduates volunteered for Officers' Training Core membership and therefore eventual active military service during the first year of the conflict, almost twice the national average of 32%.¹

Table 2
Total Student Numbers and Percentage of Eligible Males Joining the OTC
1914-18²

Year	Total Students	Female	Non-UK or Dominion	Eligible Male	OTC Recruits	OTC as Percentage of Eligible Students
1914-15	2529	546	382	1601	985	62
1915-16	1853	487	296	1071	734	69
1916-17	1739	681	318	740	704	93
1917-18	1887	686	307	894	794	89

In apparent contrast to this the 12.6% overall mortality rate among the University cohort revealed in Table 3 below was in fact only slightly higher than the national figure of 11.8%. However as the table also illustrates the proportion of deaths among members of infantry units was a full 28%.

Table 3
Members of Edinburgh University Serving in Different Branches of the Armed
Forces and Numbers Killed 1914-1918³

Branch	Number Serving	Number Fallen	Percentage of Casualties
Infantry	2,000	561	28
Air Force	200	22	11
Artillery	1,000	99	9.9
Chaplains	140	11	7.9
Engineers	300	26	8.7

¹ Between August 1914 and August 1915 approximately 1.8 million men volunteered for military service in Kitchener's New Army, or around 32% of the total eligible cohort of 5.5 million.

² Matriculation figures from Dawson, W. H., The Yearbook of the Universities of the British Empire 1915 / 1916 / 1917 / 1918 London: G. Bell and Sons, 1916-1919. OTC recruitment figures from The Student 28 May 1920 p 33

³ Table taken from The Student, 26 May 1921 p 189

Medical	3,700	205	5.5
OVERALL	7,340	924	12.6

The large discrepancy between these two percentages was at least partially explained by the demographic historian J. M. Winter who pointed out that, “Many of the men from civic or provincial universities, or from Scottish universities, were trained in science, engineering, or medicine, and served in the Royal Engineers, Royal Artillery, and Royal Army Medical Corps, in some sections of which casualty rates may have been lower than in the infantry.”¹

In other words those university members who took part in direct front-line activities were killed in unusually large numbers. Furthermore only one student conscientious objector has been identified during the post 1916 Military Service Act conscription phase of the War, a far lower proportion of the eligible cohort than the overall national figure of c. 0.8%.² This chapter will therefore look at the relevant ideological and practical trends influencing Edinburgh University students both immediately before and during World War One.

Looking first at generally pacifistic currents, during the pre-war period organised religion remained extremely popular amongst Edinburgh students with clubs such as the Christian Union, Church of Scotland Society, Edinburgh University Missionary Society and United Free Church Society comprising some of the most active of undergraduate bodies. Whilst as mentioned before institutionalised Christianity attempted to reconcile contradictory positions in relation to warfare, and the Church of Scotland hierarchy generally adopted a militaristic stance, due to the contents of

¹ Winter, J. M. The Great War and the British People MacMillan: Houndmills, 1986 p 96

² There were around 16,000 conscientious objectors in the UK during WWI out of a total of c 2 million men conscripted between 1916 and 1918. Using Officers' Training Corps membership between 1916-1918 as an approximate bench-mark, William Marwick's sole conscientious objection represents just 0.07% of the 1498 total.

The Bible the religion also unavoidably encouraged thinking and discussion about the basic moral dimensions involved.

For example one of the texts used in the course on Ecclesiastical History taught by Professor James McKinnon adopted an at least partially challenging approach to the supremacy of the state, and implicitly its claims to legitimised violence. George Fisher's History of the Christian Church pointed out that during the period of the early church, "Injunctions to abstain from teaching the gospel, and commands to pay religious honours to the emperor, were disobeyed...In this promulgation of the rights of conscience lay the germs of civil liberty. The ancient theory of the omnipotence of the state was now withstood, not by a single philosopher like Socrates, but by a multitude, most of them belonging to the humbler social class."¹

The alliance between the church and state inaugurated during the reign of the Roman Emperor Constantine in the Fourth Century was criticised with, "When Christianity was made the religion of the empire, it became also the fashion of a luxurious and decaying society. With weakened forces it confronted the peculiar difficulties and temptations of its new position. Its vital principles, being overlaid by ideas that were foreign to their nature, had become partially obscured."² The author concluded, "The pure and steady light of a true Christian life which should have shone abroad over the darkness and confusion of the world, was dimmed by a formal and churchly piety, or made ghostly by an unearthly asceticism."³

Turning to more immediately contemporary influences, the years preceding the outbreak of hostilities in 1914 were epitomised not only by an armaments race and ever increasing international tensions, but also concomitant fears about any resultant

¹ Fisher, George Park, History of the Christian Church London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1887 p 39

² Ibid. p 110

³ Ibid.

conflicts and debates over the legitimacy and efficacy of modern warfare in general. This national climate was to some extent reflected amongst the students of the University of Edinburgh, with pre-war debating topics and results revealing some degree of support for pacifistic sentiments.¹

For example in January 1914 the Edinburgh University Borderers' Association discussed the proposition, 'That War is Fundamentally Wrong', and in March of the same year there was a Union debate on the proposal, 'That War is a Pastime played at the Expense of the Poor for the Benefit of the Rich'. In 1912 the Theological Society discussed the merits of Leo Tolstoy's pacifistic ethics, and in the only two directly relevant debates during this period for which voting results are known the tendency was towards an anti-war and pro-disarmament position.

A joint debate took place between the Philomathic and Diagnostic Societies on 5 November 1912, and the motion 'That it is not by Armaments that Great Wars of the Future will be Averted' was carried by 16 votes to 12. The most significant of these war-related discussions, however, revolved around a visit to the Edinburgh University Union by the author and polemicist Norman Angell in early 1914. Mr. Angell's book, originally titled Europe's Optical Illusion but better known from its American version as The Great Illusion, had aroused a great deal of controversy in Britain and the rest of the English-speaking world since its publication in 1909.

The work was widely perceived to be an appeal for absolute pacifism, but The Great Illusion in fact pursued an underlying nationalistic agenda and argued that warfare was at least occasionally legitimate. Mr Angell pointed out that, "Whether we can, by some plan or other, make completely certain that no war of any kind

¹ For a complete listing of student debates on political and ideological topics from 1912-1919 see Appendix 4

between any people anywhere on the earth shall ever take place again, is not the sort of question with which this book is concerned.” Furthermore, “Nor does it try to prove that no war could ever, in any circumstances, be of advantage to the victors or to mankind; still less that force can never in any circumstances have a social purpose.”¹

The book further maintained that absolute moral injunctions against killing were not only false, but detrimental to the anti-war cause. “When the pacifist in these circumstances falls back upon the moral plea as opposed to economic considerations, he does not seem to realise that he has not met the militarists’ - which is here the common man’s - moral case, a case for war which is undoubtedly valid if one accepts the economic assumptions that are usually common alike to the pacifist and the militarist.”²

Indeed the historian Niall Ferguson has argued that Angell was subtly promoting the cause of British Imperialism and at the same time attempting to undermine German morale, in other words that the work was in reality part of the widespread pre-war patriotic propaganda drive. “What Angell is really arguing, in other words, is that a German military challenge to Britain would be irrational. In any case, he goes on, it is positively in the rest of the world’s interest to leave the British Empire intact...The Great Illusion, in other words, was a Liberal Imperialist tract directed at German opinion.”³ Furthermore in his review of the book Norman Angell and the Futility of War: Peace and the Public Mind by J. D. Millar, Richard Harries points out that, “Angell was not a pacifist. He believed in collective security. He was, to use Martin Ceadel’s term, a ‘pacifist’: someone who was not against war in all

¹ Angell, Norman, The Great Illusion London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1933 pp 271-272

² Ibid. pp 90-91

³ Ferguson, Niall The Pity of War London: The Penguin Press, 1998 p 22

circumstances but who strive hard for alternatives.”¹

On the other hand The Great Illusion did put forward many passionate arguments against warfare *per se*, and it seems likely that it was these more straightforward elements which were generally understood and endorsed. For example Angell asked, “Are we to continue to...spill oceans of blood, wasting mountains of treasure...to accomplish something which, when accomplished, can avail us nothing, and which, if it could avail us anything, would condemn the nations of the world to never-ending bloodshed and the constant defeat of all those aims which men, in their sober hours, know to be alone worthy of sustained endeavours?”²

In any case Mr Angell’s visit to Edinburgh University and the subsequent discussion aroused an enormous degree of interest as this account in The Student reveals. “There is no doubt that Thursday’s debate was one of the finest that has been held in the Union for many years. The motion was, ‘That Military Power is Socially and Economically Futile,’ and it was a very gratifying feature that the house remained full during the whole evening, probably due to the great interest created by Mr. Norman Angell wherever he appears.”³ The piece continued, “To attempt to reproduce his speech here would be impossible, and in any case he has already given his ideas to the world in that widely talked of book, ‘The Great Illusion.’ It was intensely interesting to listen to him working out his various points, such as the cancellation of force by force, his differentiation between military and police, and peace as a greater factor than war in the development of nationality.”⁴ The Student account concluded, “On the division being taken, the motion was carried by a

¹ Harries, Richard (Review author) Norman Angell and the Futility of War: Peace and the Public Mind by J. D. Millar in International Affairs Vol 63 No1 Winter 1986-1987 p 103

² Angell, The Great Illusion, p 347

³ The Student, 21st January 1914 p 198

⁴ Ibid.

majority of 38, the number voting for the motion being 126, while 88 voted against...Altogether, it was an excellent debate, and all the speakers are to be congratulated, as they made a very good show in spite of the brilliance of the star of the evening.”¹

In other words in the same year as the outbreak of World War One, almost 60% of a large turnout of Edinburgh University students were prepared to endorse an explicitly anti-war proposition. The Student editorial further called for the formation of a ‘War and Peace Society’ at the university commenting, “If these theories be true, the sooner they are realised the better for humanity. Why not hasten on this millennium of peace? At any rate, if such a society were formed, we should have an opportunity of arriving at the truth of the matter.”²

Not surprisingly the outbreak of war a few months later brought an end to any such overtly pacifistic appeals from official student publications or bodies. During the earlier phases of the conflict a few hesitant or challenging pieces did appear in The Student, such as an least partially regretful poem which included the lines, “Since the war; I have drawn to and shut my door;...And there is no one left me now in any wise; But this old hearth I make a friend of, on which the coal; As it lives and dies in fire; Replies; To the sudden anguish or uncontrolled desire; That fades and fails and flashes afresh in my soul.”³

The description of the conditions at the front provided by a serving officer and quoted at the opening of the chapter also included the following graphic material. “Add to the picture I have presented the presence of houses ruined by shell-fire and deserted, broken-down farm steadings full of dead animals, decaying and

¹ The Student, 21st January 1914 p 199

² Ibid. p 188

³ Ibid. 17 March 1915 p 91 ‘Winter Night’

stinking...The men who are there are men too, but how different. They are covered from head to foot in mud.”¹ The author continued, “Sometimes the grim horror of it all is brought home when your friend beside you, who has been with you, perhaps your boon companion, for months, drops like a heavy sack to the ground with eyes closed, never to open again, and lies in a pool of his own blood, hot and steaming.”² He concluded, “Now Mr. Editor, I have gone too far, and you may now understand why soldiers are unwilling to relate the things they see...In closing this odd epistle, I can only say for myself, and doubt not I voice the opinion of the great majority of fighting men on both sides, that war is the most infernal of all things. All who serve in this war, I am convinced, must long to banish warfare from the world.”³

The S.R.C. also rejected repeated calls to have compulsory service imposed on students prior to the introduction of conscription. In January 1916 Professor Scott Lang of St Andrews University wrote to the Council asking for its opinion on Compulsory Military Training, and the minutes record that, “The Edinburgh S.R.C., while not in favour of the principle of compulsion, offered as a suggestion that the authorities should show their appreciation of the value of such training by stating upon the graduate’s diploma the fact of military training having been received.”⁴ Later in the war the student body showed at least some degree of resistance to the extreme xenophobic feeling prevalent in the country at the time when it overwhelmingly dismissed a proposal to have students expressing ‘pro-German sentiments’ punished. An S.R.C. motion moved by Robert E Burns argued that, “Any student of the University who can be shown to have pro-German views, or to have

¹ The Student, 3 February 1915 p 50

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Edinburgh University Students’ Representative Council Minute Book No.9 19th June 1913-25th February 1920 21 January 1915

expressed at any time since the outbreak of war pro-German sentiments, have all classes taken out and certificates gained since the beginning of war annulled.”¹ However, “After discussion the direct negative was carried by 32 votes to 2.”²

A Left-leaning Edinburgh University Fabian Society was formed in 1907, and the S.R.C. allowed the club to publish an at least partially critical account of the war in the 1917 edition of The Edinburgh University Students Handbook. “It is to be hoped that when the ghastly slaughter of half a continent’s manhood has ceased, and the slow work of healing and reconstructing has to be considered, the enthusiasm of the new undergraduates will carry a new Society into being. In that time men and women of ideals and high courage will be wanted.”³ Furthermore, “Unheard-of wealth is being poured out like water to-day. Let this not be forgotten in the day when a few paltry millions are asked for, when the flower of our manhood comes back, it may be, maimed and broken.”⁴

As mentioned before only one student is on record as having refused conscription on the basis of a conscientious objection. William Hutton Marwick (1894-1982) was the son of the well-known missionary, Christian socialist and United Free Church minister Rev. William Marwick, and studied classics and history at Edinburgh University from 1913 to 1916. During his early student days Marwick was a supporter of the Liberal Party, but like many others became increasingly disillusioned with the foreign policy of the Government. After war broke out in August 1914 Marwick explained, “While not yet completely pacifist, I was shocked

¹ Edinburgh University Students’ Representative Council Minute Book No.9 19th June 1913-25th February 1920 12 February 1917

² Ibid.

³ Edinburgh University Students’ Handbook 1917 Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Students’ Representative Council, 1917 p 212

⁴ Ibid.

by the bellicose sermons delivered by the minister of the church which I attended the following Sunday.”¹ He joined the Home Guard established at his former school in Edinburgh, “But after some months I was convinced that it was an impracticable compromise and resigned my membership.”²

William Marwick then became a member of the newly formed Union of Democratic Control, which whilst not absolutely pacifistic was calling for a radically different approach to international affairs. This included an end to the sort of secret diplomacy which was felt to have contributed to the outbreak of war, and at the conclusion of hostilities both a rejection of any humiliation or punishment for the defeated side and the formation of a war-preventing international arbitration body. Many prominent figures in both the Liberal and Labour Parties were members of the U.D.C. including Arthur Ponsonby, Charles Trevelyan, Edmund Morel, Ramsay Macdonald, Arthur Henderson and Philip Snowden. Norman Angell also joined the organisation, and Marwick was particularly influenced by a local activist, the Edinburgh Unitarian minister Raymond Holt.

As the war progressed and the slaughter became more pronounced so too did the young student’s pacifistic convictions. Marwick explained, “There came to be greater disillusionment, both on the part of those who were serving at the front and of those who at the beginning had given their support to the war.”³ He continued, “Notable among these were such poets as Siegfried Sassoon, who expressed their bitterness, and two notable clergymen who had been, I think, army chaplains: Dick Shepherd, who afterwards founded the Peace Pledge Union, and Charles Raven, a

¹ MacDougall, Ian (ed) Voices from War and Some Labour Struggles. Personal Recollections of War in our Century by Scottish Men and Women Edinburgh: The Mercat Press, 1995 p 49

² Ibid. p 50

³ Ibid.

leader in the Fellowship of Reconciliation.”¹

In 1915 Marwick refused to attest under the Derby Scheme, a partially voluntary measure designed to encourage increased levels of enlistment. The following year mandatory conscription was introduced, and in spite of a letter of support from Peter Hume Brown, Professor of Scottish History at Edinburgh University, his request to serve with the Society of Friends Ambulance Unit in France was rejected by both Local and Appeal Tribunals. Marwick pointed out that, “The tribunal in Edinburgh was presided over by a certain Sheriff Maconochie, who was a judge of the brand of Jeffreys and Braxfield. He turned down practically every case, usually with personal abuse of the applicants.”²

When the student subsequently refused to enlist in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders he was arrested at his home in Edinburgh and placed in the cells at the High Street Police Station. On 7 September 1916 he appeared for trial at Edinburgh Sheriff Court, with The Scotsman noting that, “A young man named William Hutton Marwick, a minister's son, pleaded not guilty to a charge of failing to report himself for service under the Military Service Act. He stated that he was a Conscientious Objector, and that his appeals had been dismissed by the Local and the Appeal Tribunals, and leave to appeal, to the Central Tribunal had been refused.”³ Furthermore, “He had offered to undertake ambulance work. He complained of the manner in which the Tribunals had dealt with his case.”⁴ However, “Sheriff-Substitute Guy pointed out that he could not review the decisions of the Tribunals. He found the charged proved, fined the accused £2; and handed him over to the

¹ MacDougall, Ian (ed) Voices from War p 50

² Ibid. p 51

³ The Scotsman 8 September 1916 p 3

⁴ Ibid.

military authorities.”¹

Marwick was subsequently court-marshalled by the army when he refused to wear a uniform or obey orders, and sentenced to one hundred and twenty days hard-labour at Wormwood Scrubs prison. He only served three weeks of this term before finally having his conscientious objection plea accepted by a newly formed Central Tribunal. Marwick spent the rest of the war engaged in mainly manual ‘Work of National Importance’ in Britain, then was allowed to join the Society of Friends relief efforts in France in early 1918. He later emphasised the fact that, “Physical ill-treatment was rare; many soldiers regarded C.O. prisoners as fellow-sufferers; and between the ‘conscientious assenters’ who had volunteered for the forces and the C.O.s of their acquaintance there was mutual respect and goodwill.”²

William Marwick was finally released from war work in the spring of 1919, though when he returned home two of his former Edinburgh University professors refused to supply him with employment references. Marwick explained that, “Professor Lodge who was then Professor of History, was a Liberal professedly but of a rather imperialistic type, demanded to know what I had been doing during the war. When I told him he said, ‘Well, I wouldn’t give you a job and can’t recommend anyone else to do so.’”³ Furthermore, “Another professor - of Constitutional History [Professor James Hepburn Millar] - who was a rank Tory, refused to have anything more to do with me.”⁴

Marwick did receive support from a University lecturer in Economic History and fellow member of the Union of Democratic Control, J. F. Rees, who stated, “If that’s

¹ The Scotsman 8 September 1916 p 3

² Marwick, William H ‘Conscientious Objection in Scotland in the First World War’ in Scottish Journal of Science Volume 1 Part 3 June 1972 page 160

³ MacDougall, Ian (ed) Voices from War p 58

⁴ Ibid.

the way they treat Marwick we must do our best for him.”¹ Rees helped him obtain a teaching post with the Workers Educational Association, and he remained on the staff of this organisation for twelve years. Marwick subsequently became first an extra-mural lecturer and Carnegie Fellow at Edinburgh University, then in 1948 a full-time lecturer in Economic History. He retired in 1964 and died eighteen years later. Looking back at his World War One attitudes and experiences in 1983 he reflected that, “So far as I can judge myself now at my time of life I would retain the same position towards war whatever the issues were. I have not changed my opinions at all. I was more convinced than ever by the Second World War that war was futile and vicious and wouldn’t have any good results.”² William Marwick married a fellow student member of the University Fabian Society, Maeve Brereton, in 1923, and both were active members of the Society of Friends or Quakers. Maeve Marwick was also a prominent activist in the Family Planning movement of the 1920s and 1930s.

In any case as indicated before William Hutton Marwick’s refusal to enlist and fight was very much the exception which proved the rule among Edinburgh University students, and most of the ideological influences and activities before and during World War One were in a notably patriotic and militaristic direction. As indicated in the introduction both the eugenicist and racial concepts popular during the early twentieth century had pronounced social-Darwinian dimensions, which in turn tended to encourage international divisions and strife. Titles of pre-war debates such as ‘That Eugenics is a Practical Science’ (Dialectical Society, November 1913) and, ‘That Great Men make the Times, not Times Great Men’ (United Free Church

¹ MacDougall, Ian (ed) Voices from War p 58

² Ibid.

Society, also November 1913) show at least some interest in contemporarily popular eugenicist ideas among students.¹

Furthermore many of the set text books used in undergraduate courses at this time strongly promoted racial concepts and hierarchies. For example a work by Hugh Egerton used in the Colonial and Indian History class contended that, “The attitude of the Dutch has been that instinctively held by most men of superior races towards savages. They have sternly refused to regard them as fit for any kind of social or political equality.”² Mr Egerton continued, “Unfortunately for the British Empire...the African Kaffir is made of stouter stuff than are the savages generally, and instead of becoming extinct before the march of civilization, surpass the European in the work of propagating his species.”³ Another book used in the same course argued that, “The seamy side of the Maori life, as of all savage life, was patent to the most unimaginative observer. The traveller found it not easy to dwell on the dignity, poetry and bravery of a race which contemned [*sic.*] washing, and lived, for the most part, in noisome hovels...Without the cringing manner of the Oriental, the Maori had his full share of deceitfulness.”⁴

One of the standard British history texts used throughout the period at hand was Advanced History of Great Britain by T F Tout. This work claimed that, “There were, moreover, difficulties with the free blacks [after the abolition of slavery in the British Empire in 1834] who settled down in happy sloth on their small patches of land and could not be tempted to work regularly for their former masters, while their

¹ See Appendix 4

² Egerton, Hugh Edward A Short History of British Colonial Policy London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1897 p 270

³ Ibid.

⁴ Reeves, William Pember The Long White Cloud. Ao Tea Roa London: Horace Marshall and Son, 1898 p 52

numbers and claim to exercise political rights, made them a political as well as an economic trouble.”¹ Students of geography were exposed to the view that, “It will be found that in the Eastern hemisphere the inter-tropical regions, hot, moist and more favourable to vegetable than to animal vitality, are usually occupied by savage, cultureless populations...In the same way the higher races and cultures are confined to the more favoured north temperate zone.”² Elements of Politics by Henry Sidgwick which was listed in the political science curriculum claimed that, “In most of the territories open to the future expansion of civilised European States, manual labour is likely to be mainly performed by non-European races...Further restrictions on the freedom of intercourse and exchange between aborigines and settlers may be temporarily necessary.”³

The Student also frequently published implicitly or explicitly racially derogatory items. For example an editorial from February 1913 claimed that “the influx of colonial students” was helping to “kill the student-spirit in Edinburgh.”⁴ In contrast to visitors from the Dominions, who were most welcome, “Those who come from His Majesty’s overseas colonies are, for the most part, dead weight. They take no part in University life; they go from classroom to Union, and from the Union to digs, grow fat, graduate, and vacate their places for another of their kidney.”⁵ Another editorial from the same year recounted that, “Mr. L. Gordon Grant has returned from the wilds of West Africa...We understand that he has shot every conceivable variety of bird and beast, and has incidentally found time to dispense justice to the untutored

¹ Tout, T. F., An Advanced History of Great Britain. From the Earliest Times to 1918 London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1920 p 721

² Keane, A.H., Man Past and Present Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1899 pp18-19

³ Sidgwick, Henry, The Elements of Politics London: Macmillan and Co. 1891 pp 311-313

⁴ The Student 5 February 1913 p 223

⁵ Ibid.

native with a lavish right hand. If he is still the same Grant who used to rule the S.R.C. with an iron flail, and could at times reduce it to a quivering jelly, we are just slightly sorry for the nigger of the Coast.”¹

Contemporary theories of race were intertwined with those of imperial consolidation and expansion, which was in turn among the main causes of the inter-European rivalries which led up to World War One. Tout’s Advanced History of Great Britain claimed that the British victory at the Battle of Omdurman in 1898 meant that, “The work of civilisation, which had done so much good in Egypt was extended, amid extraordinary difficulties, to the Sudan.”²

Henry Sidgwick’s political text mentioned above dealt with the issue at a more general level and argued that, “It does not indeed seem to me that the moral claims of savages to their hunting-grounds can be allowed, in the interest of the human race, to override the claim of civilised races to expand.”³ Furthermore, “Substantial gains are likely to accrue to the conquering community regarded as an aggregate of individuals, through the enlarged opportunities for the private employment of capital, the salaries earned in governmental service, and especially, in the case of a commercial community, through the extended markets open to trade.”⁴ He continued this straightforward promotion of colonialism with, “Besides these material advantages, there are legitimate sentimental satisfactions...Such as the justifiable pride which a civilised community feel in the beneficent exercise of dominion, and in the performance by their nation of the noble task of spreading the highest form of

¹ The Student 9 May 1913 p 315

² Tout Advanced History of Great Britain p 693

³ Sidgwick, Elements of Politics p 243

⁴ Ibid. p 299

civilisation.”¹ Sidgwick concluded, “The latter result might be called a process of spiritual expansion.”²

A Short History of British Colonial Policy by Hugh Egerton maintained this spiritual-nationalist theme in claiming that, “Behind the mistakes and failures of individuals and generations, there grows upon us, as we study the history, the sense of an unseen and superintending Providence controlling the development of the Anglo-Saxon race. Through the vistas of the ages the voice is heard, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth.’”³ He concluded with a reference to the loss of the American colonies combined with an exhortation not to repeat the mistake, arguing that, “Once in the past the wrong choice was made, but the fault did not go back to the roots of the national character...the unseen Powers are still making trial of us, still giving to each nation the fate which it deserves. May the lessons of the past be laid to heart, and may Great Britain not again squander her priceless national inheritance.”⁴

The specific issue of increased imperial political unity, including an explicitly militaristic dimension, was a common one in the set texts of the pre-war period. Tout argued that, “The only permanent and satisfactory way of uniting these great groups [the Dominions] with each other and with the mother country is by some wise scheme of Imperial Federation, which would bind together the British races in one of the greatest states the world has ever seen.”⁵ Hugh Egerton referred to both the 1902 Imperial Conference and accelerating international arms race by pointing out that, “The rapid growth in recent years of the expenditure upon the British army and navy,

¹ Sidgwick, Elements of Politics p 299

² Ibid.

³ Egerton A Short History of British Colonial Policy p 525

⁴ Ibid. p 527

⁵ Tout Advanced History of Great Britain p 722

rendered necessary, at least to a great extent, by the increase of the fleets of foreign Powers...has had the inevitable result of calling attention to the unequal manner in which the different portions of the Empire provide for its defence.”¹ He suggested as a remedy, “Some form of connexion, preserving the separate political and social interests for which the Colonies are naturally jealous, and yet at the same time allowing the Empire to speak and to act as one in the hour of need, may in the fullness of time solve the problem.”²

Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan’s The Influence of Sea Power Upon History 1660-1783 was a well-known technical and polemicist work of the late-Victorian and Edwardian eras and utilised in both the European History and Military History courses. This book again promoted both British imperialism and its vigorous military defence, this time emphasising the naval dimensions. Mahan claimed that, “For two hundred years England has been the greatest commercial nation of the world. More than any other her wealth has been entrusted to the sea in war as in peace...If she maintains her navy in full strength, the future will doubtless repeat the lesson of the past.”³

There was also a great deal of interest in the topic of international law during the pre-war period. In particular the Geneva and Hague Conventions of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries sought to establish agreed codes of practices over the use of military force. However the ameliorative rather than preclusive approach adopted towards warfare could in fact indirectly encourage the syndrome through formalising and legitimising it, as many of the books used in the International Law

¹ Egerton A Short History of British Colonial Policy p 511

² Ibid. p 509

³ Mahan, Captain Alfred Thayer The Influence of Sea Power Upon History 1660-1783 London: S. Low 1889 p 482

course at Edinburgh University illustrate. For example in his Treatise on International Law William Hall argued that, “Though non-combatants are protected from direct injury, they are exposed to all the personal injuries indirectly resulting from military or naval operations directed against the armed forces of the state.”¹

The Earl of Birkenhead promoted a similar approach in his International Law claiming that, “Not every mode or instrument of violence is permitted by the laws of war. The general principle must always be observed that only such violence is permissible as is reasonably proportionate to the object to be attained, namely, the breaking down of the armed resistance of the enemy.”² In International Law Part II War John Westlake maintained this basically militaristic theme in arguing that, “The object on the part of each belligerent is to break down the resistance of the other to the terms which he requires for peace...Even the extinction of the weaker state by conquest may be legitimate, if it is a state of which the habitual conduct and known aims make it certain that peaceful relations with it cannot safely exist.”³

Most of the texts used in this course argued that the dictates of International Law would in any case almost certainly be largely set aside during any actual fighting. For example Lord Birkenhead stated that, “Carried to its conclusion the application of the maxim [that military necessity overrides all laws of war] as advocated would involve the result that in case of extreme necessity the laws of war could be ignored, and with the belligerent himself a judge of that necessity the laws of war would soon cease to exist.”⁴ He concluded, “Such an eventuality would not necessarily be entirely evil in

¹ Hall, William Edward, Treatise on International Law Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890 p 395

² Birkenhead, The Right Hon. Earl of, International Law London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1899 p 22

³ Westlake, John International Law. Part II War Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907 p 53

⁴ Birkenhead, International Law p 222

its results.”¹

William Hall similarly pointed out that, “Many soldiers and sailors, many men concerned with affairs, have little belief that much of what has been added of late years to international law will bear any serious strain. And, however convenient a standard of reference that law may be for the settlement of minor disputes; however willing statesmen may be to defer to it when they are anxious not to quarrel, grave doubt is felt whether even old and established dictates will be obeyed when the highest interests of nations are in play.”² He also brought the issue into a more directly contemporary and nationalistic context by arguing that, “This feeling...is probably stronger in England than elsewhere but it is not confined to England...It would be idle to pretend that Europe is not now in great likelihood moving towards a time at which the strength of international law will be too hardly tried.”³ With some prescience the author claimed that, “Whole nations will be in the field...national existences will be at stake, men will be tempted to do anything which will shorten hostilities and tend to a decisive issue. Conduct in the next great war will certainly be hard; it is very doubtful if it will be scrupulous, whether on the part of belligerents or neutrals; and most likely the next war will be great.”⁴

Henry Sidgwick’s Elements of Politics mentioned above gathered together contemporary ideas about race, imperialism and international law with those of straightforward nationalism and militarism. He argued that the definition of a nation was a “community of patriotic sentiment”⁵ brought about by “the memories of a

¹ Birkenhead, International Law p 222

² Hall, Treatise on International Law p 395

³ Ibid.

⁴ Hall, Treatise on International Law p 396

⁵ Sidgwick, Elements of Politics p 214

common political history, and especially of common struggles against foreign foes.”¹ Sidgwick further claimed that, “War must be admitted to be justified not only by actual aggression, real or alleged, but also by unmistakable manifestations of an aggressive design: a nation unmistakably threatened can hardly be condemned for striking the first blow, if by so doing it gains an important advantage in self-defence.”² He ruled out “the harsh treatment of non-combatants”, but only because of “the danger of rousing the sympathetic indignation of neutrals, together with...the serious inconveniences to which an invading army is exposed in the midst of a population embittered by private injuries.”³ Furthermore the killing of enemy captives would be justified, “if the prisoners refused to give their parole not to serve during the remainder of the war, or if experience showed that their word could not be trusted.”⁴

Elements of Politics also endorsed the argument for compulsory military service being introduced into Britain which was popular in the period running up to World War One. Sidgwick claimed that, “The best political method for meeting this [external threat] seems to be a general military training of the citizens: so that there may be always a large proportion of them who, while not forming part of an actual standing army, are capable of being rapidly organised into an effective military force.”⁵

As well as being exposed to ideas about conscription in text books students were frequently given talks by representatives of the organisations established at the time to unite the country and empire behind a perceived imminent military effort. For

¹ Sidgwick, Elements of Politics p 214

² Ibid. p 277

³ Ibid. p 256

⁴ Ibid. Footnote 1

⁵ Sidgwick, Elements of Politics p 618

example the Inaugural Address to the Dialectic Society (the University's longest established debating club, founded in 1787) of session 1912-13 was presented by the Organising Secretary of the National Service League. This grouping was founded in 1901 by George Shee to campaign for the introduction of conscription, and by 1912 had nearly 100,000 members across the country. According to the Student account there was a large attendance at the meeting, and Col. Seton stated, "That it was the duty of every good citizen to aid in the defence of his country. He contended that there was no greater mistake than to suppose that if we have a strong navy then we are absolutely secure. The great difficulty was to get people to believe that there was such a thing in the international sphere as the Balance of Power."¹

The National Service League spokesman continued, "But once you recognized what that was, it was impossible to escape the conviction that it was imperative for us to provide a much larger army than we at present possess. We might be supreme on the sea. But that would not hinder a German army from razing Paris."² Furthermore, "If the *Entente Cordiale* was to mean anything at all, our military power must be substantially increased. If war broke out we must be in a position to occupy Belgium. This would leave the country denuded of all military except the Territorial Force. This Force Col. Seton maintained was inadequate in numbers, and insufficiently trained."³ Seton also maintained that an invasion was an imminent threat, therefore, "Under the system of the National Service League every lad would receive military instruction at school, and would have to do four to six months' continuous training when he had reached the age of eighteen. The speaker concluded by referring to the success of universal military training lately instituted in

¹ The Student 23 October 1912 p 37

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Australia.”¹

A subsequent Secretary of the League led a discussion on ‘Military Service’ in the Philomathic Society on 15 November the same year, and one of the few letters of a directly political or ideological nature which was published in the generally apolitical The Student of this time also argued in favour of at least a degree of compulsory military service among students. The author alluded to a letter in The Times calling for “Universal Military Service by so-called indirect means”² at Cambridge University. He then argued, “Why should not our University of Edinburgh be urged to make it a rule that all candidates for graduation should first reach a standard of military efficiency? The different Units of the Corps are keen and do their utmost; but even here the short-comings of the voluntary system are only too apparent. Besides, there are hundreds of fellows who could, but do not, join.”³

The Dialectic Society’s Inaugural Address of 1913 was presented by Lord Linlithgow who spoke on the subject of ‘War’. According to the student newspaper the invited guest dealt with contemporary discussions about “the realities of race and nationhood, and controverted most emphatically the views of those who believe that the importance of these was growing gradually less.”⁴ Furthermore, “He maintained that distinctions of race and nationality had never been more definite than they were to-day. In dealing with arbitration, he conceded to this last process a certain value when it dealt with international questions of minor importance, yet he showed no little hope that arbitration would entirely supersede war.”⁵

The Student editorials themselves frequently displayed a strongly militaristic bias,

¹ The Student 23 October 1912 p 37

² Ibid. 22 January 1913 pp 194-195

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid. 29 October 1913 p 27

⁵ Ibid.

including a vigorous support for the Officers' Training Corps. During the pre-war period the paper provided extensive coverage of the organisation including multiple-page illustrated reports of its various camps. Furthermore the announcement of Norman Angell's visit to the Union mentioned above also contended that, "His chief work [The Great Illusion] undoubtedly contains the inconsistencies and misplaced hypotheses which are inseparable from such a flagrant disregard of political and economic orthodoxy"¹, and hoped that, "All OTC men will turn out and vindicate their position."²

After the outbreak of fighting between Great Britain and Germany in August 1914 The Student was largely given over to nationalistic and martial propagandist pieces. The first editorial of the war commented, "In years to come, when the din of battle is stilled, when Time has healed our wounds, and when the history of the great European War comes to be written in the light of after events, how will our historians regard that day of August on which Britain threw down the gauntlet to Germany? Today we speak of 'Black August.'"³ The article continued, "[However] When passion has died and when hate rankles no longer, may it not be that the month of August 1914 will be hailed as a great month in our nation's history, the month which issued in a new era of national development and of national consciousness?"⁴

The author further maintained that this was a struggle involving 'Idealism versus Materialism' and that, "Britain was outraged at the immorality of a Power which had paid no regard to its plighted word. It realised that it still cherished the old ideals of Truth and Chivalry, evolved anew from a wide-reaching system of education, from a

¹ The Student 14 January 1914 p 167

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. 26 November 1914 p 3

⁴ Ibid.

Press which is, on the whole, noble and elevating, and from the handing down of a proud and clean tradition.”¹ The vigorous response to calls for enlistment and general national service had apparently refuted the arguments of “carping pessimists who assured us that Britain’s hour was past, that she showed clear signs of disintegration and of decadence at home and abroad.”²

The staunch loyalty to Britain shown by the member states of the Empire was noted, then the editorial highlighted the courageous response among Edinburgh students themselves. “Britain in her hour of trial expects much, and has a right to expect much, from her Universities. As befits the University of Scotland’s ancient capital, the University which boasts Earl Kitchener as its Lord Rector, Edinburgh students and graduates have played the game.”³ Those who had already fallen should not be mourned too much, for it was, “not for us to grudge them a soldier’s death.”⁴ The piece concluded with a clarion-like, “To-day all that our nation holds dearer than life is at stake. Honour and justice and truth are to be vindicated. To arms! To arms!”⁵

The following February the newly created University Roll of Honour, or on-going list of those killed in action, was discussed in another editorial with, “No language ever written, no orator ever born, no inspiration that ever stirred the soul of poets, can tell a nobler story of devotion and self-sacrifice. In common with her best of the nation, Alma Mater has proved herself worthy; right nobly has she given of her sons.”⁶ The contrasts between normal university life and war-time experiences were

¹ The Student 26 November 1914 p 3

² Ibid. p 4

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid. 3 February 1915 p 41

noted with, “Last year we were dining and dancing, with occasional periods of work. Now the dancing men have become fighting men and have exchanged the pleasures of the dining-hall and the ball-room for the grim and deadly work on the plains of Flanders, and the hidden dangers of the dark North Sea. They have gone to confront the enemy’s brutal power with dauntless British courage.”¹ Whilst moral pressure was put on the readers to enlist with, “What of those who remain? The men are quietly waiting and training, preparing themselves to play their part in the greatest tragedy the world has ever staged. There are cases of men who are indifferent to the untoward events that are happening around them, but we refuse to number any such among those who have been nurtured at the breast of Alma Mater.”²

As will be covered in more detail in a later chapter many members of staff and university officials also strongly encouraged student military service, sometimes using the same sort of at least partially shaming approach as this Student editorial. For example in November 1917, the Principal Sir James Alfred Ewing publicly rebuked the student body for bad behaviour at the recent laureation of the American Ambassador.

The Scotsman reported that Sir James pointed out to his student audience that, “Such a demonstration would at any time be unworthy, and at the present time it was somewhat disgraceful. We were at war. The great majority of the students were daily risking their lives, whilst there was a handful left at home who were not taking part in the war.”³ The Principal continued, “On Friday they were really celebrating the entry of America into the war. There were young Americans present in the hall who had come from Universities in the West, not to stay here, only visiting us in passing,

¹ The Student 3 February 1915 p 41.

² Ibid.

³ The Scotsman 5 November 1917 p 4

on their way to the trenches. He wondered what impression they got of our stay-at-home students.”¹

These comments were made at the inauguration of a new Lord Rector, Sir David Beatty, and throughout the period at hand those holding the post at Edinburgh University had notably military dimensions to their backgrounds. The Earl of Minto (1845-1914) was elected to the Edinburgh Rectorship in 1911, and his career to date had been that of a prominent soldier-statesman. Minto was educated at Eton and Cambridge, became an officer in the Scots Fusilier Guards, took part in the Russo-Turkish, Afghan and Egyptian wars, then was respectively Governor-General of Canada (1898-1904) and Viceroy of India (1905-1910) before finally retiring shortly before his election to the Edinburgh office.

His obituary in The Student in 1914 emphasised the extent to which Lord Minto’s martial exploits had been influential in his selection for the office. The article pointed out that “[He] came of virile stock. In the old days of Border feuds the Elliots were ever first-class fighting men...The fourth Earl of Minto, who passed away on Saturday morning, may be said to have combined the best qualities of the earlier and of the later generations of his house”² The laudatory piece continued, “In the prime of his manhood he was a keen soldier, and, when no active fighting was to be done, the eager student of the soldier art...It is to such men that we owe both the maintenance and the credit of the Empire.”³ It concluded that, “The University will always be proud that the name of the fourth Earl of Minto has been inscribed on the roll of its Lord Rectors.”⁴ A tribute in The Scotsman to Lord Minto after his death in

¹ The Scotsman 5 November 1917 p 4

² The Student, 6 March 1914 p 307

³ Ibid.

⁴ The Student, 6 March 1914 p 307

1914 by Sir Ludovic Grant, Secretary of the Senatus and Professor of Public Law, stated that, “The students...had been deprived of a Lord Rector whom they had most peculiar reasons for regarding with affection and pride. The Earl of Minto's brilliance in military exploits...the efficiency of his proconsular services, and the delightful simplicity of his character had made a many-sided appeal wherever he went.”¹

The two subsequent Rectorial vacancies arose during the war, and as in many other areas of national life the traditional democratic processes were set aside for the duration of the struggle. With the full approval of the University authorities the leaders of the two main political societies, the Conservative and Liberal clubs, agreed to joint nominations and the selections were carried out by ‘popular acclamation’.

The Scotsman covered the first such event pointing out that, “Mr D. B. Keith, LL.B., President of the University Unionist Association, in moving that Lord Kitchener be appointed Lord Rector, said he doubted if in the long history of the Lord Rectorship they had ever met in circumstances so unique or so historic.”² The piece continued, “In proposing Lord Kitchener, he said they desired to do honour to the man who was known as the organiser of victory, and who at this moment was the one on whose skill, courage, and sanity the ‘whole future of the Empire’ depended. (Applause.)” The Principal of the University Sir William Turner then “congratulated the students upon having risen to the occasion. They had felt that this was not a time to indulge in party feeling or party spirit, but that they should present a united front as an expression of their unanimous sentiment.”³ Sir William further thought that “The students of Edinburgh had a special responsibility imposed upon them, in their choice of a Lord Rector at this time, because there was no University in the British

¹ The Scotsman 3 March 1914 p 6

² Ibid. 26 October 1914 p 5

³ Ibid.

Islands which so fully represented the feelings of the Empire on such an occasion. (Applause.)”¹ He concluded that Lord Kitchener, “As Secretary for War was the right man in the right place... ‘May God defend the right.’ (Applause).”²

Like Lord Minto, Horatio Kitchener had served a long and distinguished military career before his selection as Rector of Edinburgh University. He fought in Palestine (1874-78), Cyprus (1878-82) and the Sudan (1883-85) and was Chief-of-Staff to Lord Frederick Roberts, the commander of the British forces in the Boer War between 1899 and 1902. Kitchener was himself the Commander-in-Chief of British armed forces in India from 1902 to 1909, then Military Governor of Egypt between 1911 and 1914 before being created Secretary of War at the outbreak of WWI.

Lord Kitchener was unable to present the traditional Rectorial Address due to his death at sea in June 1916, but did send a message to the student body the previous year. “I am happy to have this opportunity of bearing testimony to the high spirit of patriotic devotion which has moved so many members of the universities of the United Kingdom to postpone all thoughts of academic success and to come forward at the call of their country in this great crisis.”³ Furthermore, “As your Lord Rector, I am indeed proud to tell that no fewer than 2,000 students from the University of Edinburgh are now serving in the Forces of the Crown. I am confident that they will worthily maintain the high traditions of their Alma Mater.”⁴

His death was commemorated in The Student with a major editorial which stated that, “On the evening of Monday the 5th of June the most tragic and unlooked-for event of the War occurred: Lord Kitchener, the foundation upon which we built up

¹ The Scotsman 26 October 1914 p 5

² Ibid.

³ The Student, 8th July 1915 p viii

⁴ Ibid.

the great confidence and assurance of the nation in our ultimate victory, was drowned at sea.”¹ Furthermore, “The greatest soldier of his age had all but completed his task, an undertaking unparalleled in the history of mankind; he has placed the fruits of victory within our grasp, and we mean to take sure possession of them.”²

The piece continued, “We were wont to say that, when Kitchener came to deliver his Rectorial address after the war had finished, there would be such a celebration as this old University had never seen in all its long history. But the call of the soldier has wrecked our fond dreamings, and now he lies asleep under the waters of the North Sea.” The Student obituary concluded that, “He died as he lived, a soldier in harness, recking [*sic.*] not of himself or of his own safety, serving the flag to the very end. So we take leave of him, and do honour to the memory of a very great man and a very gallant soldier.”³

Admiral Sir David Beatty, Commander of the British Grand Fleet, was appointed to be Lord Kitchener’s successor as Edinburgh University Rector in late 1917. His nomination had been proposed by Mr J. A. Stirling, the Senior President of the S.R.C. and recipient of a Distinguished Service Cross as a serving surgeon probationer in the Royal Navy. The Scotsman reported that at his inauguration Sir Alfred Ewing, “Addressed the students, and expressed the great satisfaction he felt in the choice they had made.”⁴ The Principal continued, “For Sir David Beatty was a most distinguished officer of the Fleet; who had already done great personal service to his country and who had the almost unique, if not unique honour of being an

¹ The Student 16 June 1916 pp 142-143

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ The Scotsman 5 November 1917 p 4

Admiral at the age of 39 years.”¹ He concluded that, “Admiral Beatty's election indicated their appreciation of what the Fleet meant to Britain, and especially what it meant to Britain in the present war. If it had not been for the Fleet the end would have come swiftly and disastrously. Germany would have won the war.”²

The student newspaper also covered Sir David's appointment arguing that, “The choice of the students was an expression of the appreciation felt by the University for the service rendered to the nation by the Navy, as well as a personal tribute to the new Lord Rector.”³ The article continued, “The University has contributed a large proportion of men to the Royal Navy as well as to other arms of the service, and in one aspect Sir David Beatty's election is a symbol of the spirit of the students in attendance towards their classmates who are serving under his command.”⁴

In conclusion, then, students at Edinburgh University showed some receptivity to the pacifistic ideas popular during the pre-World War One period, as illustrated by the 60% support for an anti-war motion in January 1914. However this ideological interest did not extend to the creation of a student peace organisation of the type set up at many other British universities such as the Peace Society established at Aberdeen University in 1912.⁵ The official student representative body and its Student newspaper maintained a firm support for the Officers' Training Corps throughout, and a series of overtly militaristic Rectors were selected both before and during the war.

The response to the outbreak of hostilities with Germany in August 1914 was one

¹ The Scotsman 5 November 1917 p 4

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. 14 December 1917 p 28.

⁴ The Student 14 December 1917 p 28

⁵ Anderson, R. D. The Student Community at Aberdeen 1860-1939 Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988 p 81

of near-universal patriotic enthusiasm and willingness to enlist. Between 1914 and 1918, therefore, the University of Edinburgh more or less transformed itself into a military camp, and thousands of students were prepared to exchange the comfort and security of Old College for the dangers and degradations of the Western Front.

Chapter Three. The 1920s: The Student Body

'The Brat', a tale of the underworld, provides opportunities for hits at University personalities, and these skits - Don Frances Toven, for instance, sits at the piano, and the result is bagpipe music - were thoroughly enjoyed. One of the best items is the Hawaiian scene, which makes a substantial pretence of colour, costume, and music. The music for this piece is by Mr Frank Ayrey, who sings the principal song, 'Hawaiian Moon', which hauntingly catches the spirit of its kind. Mr Ayrey does excellent work also in the name part in 'The Brat'. The Bronchial Brothers in student songs, a 'little straight music', with the parody of the popular song 'Coaling' and the conjuring interlude, with an assistant's faux pas and other incidentals, are in the right nonsensical key.¹

The 1920s very much represented the lull between two storms. The preceding decade had witnessed the greatest concentrated slaughter in the history of humanity, whilst the 1930s involved ever-increasing international tensions and actual violence culminating in an even more destructive World War.

A general pattern of attitudes to foreign affairs and warfare can be identified in the Western Allied nations in general, and the United Kingdom in particular, during the years following the end of the First World War. Whilst battle weariness had to some extent crept in by late 1918 the returning troops were generally greeted as conquering heroes, and the conflict itself eulogised as an entirely justified struggle between the forces of good and evil. This sentiment was epitomised by a speech given to the House of Commons by the Prime Minister, The Right Honourable David Lloyd George, in July 1919, in which he stated, "Why did we go to war? Because that instinct which is a compound of experience and conscience taught the British people that something which is fundamental to human happiness and human progress was

¹ The Scotsman 3 December 1924 p 10. Coverage of the annual S. R. Ceenum, or Edinburgh University student concert, instituted in December 1918. 'Don Frances Toven' is a reference to Professor Donald Tovey, holder of the Chair of Music at Edinburgh between 1914 and 1940

put in jeopardy by the great military power of Germany.”¹

Furthermore, “What would have happened had [Germany] succeeded? The world is rocking and reeling under the blow, a blow that failed. I do not know when it will recover. I have seen something of Europe, and I have heard more, and I do not know when that blow will come to an end. That is the blow that failed.”² The Prime Minister continued, “Had it succeeded, liberty in Europe would have vanished, and that is more precious than even precious lives. It would have altered the whole character of Europe, and you would have had a military tyranny throughout the whole world.”³

An annual Armistice Day to commemorate the date of victory was inaugurated in Britain in the same year and hundreds of war memorials in honour of ‘the glorious fallen’ swiftly constructed across the country. Those who had claimed exemption from military service on the basis of a conscientious objection were disbarred from voting in the 1919 General Election, whilst individuals with a German background were precluded from public offices and private positions for several years after the conclusion of formal hostilities. The Treaty of Versailles itself tended toward the punitive rather than reconciliatory, and the League of Nations established under its auspices was in many ways a continuation of the victorious wartime alliance by other means rather than a genuinely impartial arbitration body. Both Germany and Russia, for example, were barred from membership.

A ‘Ten Year Rule’ precluding the possibility of Great Britain taking part in any major military conflicts for the period specified was introduced by Lloyd George’s National Government in 1919, and a large degree of disarmament engaged in during

¹ Hansard, HC Deb, Vol. 117 (1918-19) 3 July 1919 1427-1428

² Ibid. 1219-1220.

³ Ibid.

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the immediate post-war period. However these measures can be viewed more in terms of the economic and financial exigencies imposed by four years of total war than any fundamental ideological transformation.

As the 1920s wore on, however, and the immediate emotional impact of the Great War faded the advantages of a permanent international settlement, indeed the abolition of warfare itself, were increasingly recognised. The Locarno Treaty (1925) and Dawes and Young Plans (1924 and 1930 respectively) sought to ameliorate the harsher aspects of Versailles, and Germany was permitted to join the League of Nations in September 1926. A Preparatory Commission for a World Disarmament Conference was established in 1925, and three years later the Kellogg-Briand Pact committed all sixty-five national signatories, including the United Kingdom, to the following war-renouncing policies:

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ARTICLE I: The High Contracting Parties solemnly declare in the names of their respective peoples that they condemn recourse to war for the solution of international controversies, and renounce it, as an instrument of national policy in their relations with one another.

ARTICLE II: The High Contracting Parties agree that the settlement or solution of all disputes or conflicts of whatever nature or of whatever origin they may be, which may arise among them, shall never be sought except by pacific means.

These peace-orientated political and diplomatic moves found their parallels in cultural life, with the latter part of the 1920s witnessing the publication of a large number of overtly anti-war pieces of literature. Perhaps the most famous of these was Erich Remarque's All Quiet on the Western Front (1929), and in Britain a series of pacifistic novels and poetry anthologies appeared between 1926 and 1930. Authors such as Siegfried Sassoon and Max Plowman produced anti-war material and as the

historian Niall Ferguson put it, “By the time Montague’s novel Rough Justice came out in 1926, it was part of a veritable wave of war writing, as if a decade had been needed for the experience to become intelligible, or at least expressible.”²

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This anti-militaristic climate continued into the early part of the 1930s with the Labour Party being led by a self-proclaimed pacifist, George Lansbury, between 1931 and 1935, Oxford University Union passing its famous anti-war ‘King and Country’ motion in 1933, and the formation of the outright pacifist Peace Pledge Union taking place in the following year. The general post-WWI ideological pattern in Great Britain then, seems to have comprised a continued eulogisation and glorification of warfare for a few years after the signing of the Armistice of November 1918 followed by ever-increasing support for international arbitration and disarmament as the 1920s progressed.

This chapter will therefore look at the relevant stated positions of the student body at the University of Edinburgh between 1918 and 1930 to determine whether they conformed to this wider picture. Generally anti- and pro-war attitudes will be examined in turn, and as throughout the thesis specific aspects to be examined will include not only overt militarism but also underlying and interlinked nationalistic, racial, health and fitness, and eugenicist positions.

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The cessation of hostilities on 11 November 1918 was marked by widespread and spontaneous celebrations in Edinburgh, including among University students. The Scotsman pointed out that some of the undergraduates, “[Had] commandeered a considerable, if miscellaneous, assortment of transport. There were taxicabs, motor bicycles, lorries and wheelbarrows, on which everyone who could find space

² The Scotsman 12 November 1918 p 3

clambered or precariously hung.”¹ Furthermore, “Overhead were carried boards with strange inscriptions. They indicated, in black letters on a white ground, that the company were proceeding from Pilrig to Gorgie, from Newington to Murrayfield, or from Morningside to Abbeyhill. The boards seemed familiar. A little reflection showed their origin. They were the direction boards which had been taken forcibly, although with all good humour, from the Edinburgh tramway cars.”²

The two Student editorials immediately preceding and following the November 1918 Armistice were markedly less militaristic and jingoistic than their wartime predecessors. The first of these pieces proclaimed, “Now at long last, in the fifth year of war, the situation is tingling with life and hope - hope that even showed itself in the dark days of the past in plans for a League of Nations, in suggested reforms of Indian affairs...in the service of women, in the vitality of the Labour world.”³ The actual conclusion of hostilities was marked with, “And so the war is over. What peace will mean to us it is difficult in many ways to realise...But it is something to be alive, with the future we look to before us.” Furthermore, “What did we do in Armistice Week? Not work, certainly, but things of greater moment. We processioned, holidayed (‘a sober holiday, gentlemen!’) and shouted ourselves hoarse. *Qui voulez-vous? C’est la paix!*”⁴

The positive reference to the then embryonic League of Nations in the first of these editorials set the tone for a widespread support for this organisation, indeed internationalism in general, among Edinburgh students throughout the period at hand. The first recorded debate after the conclusion of hostilities was held by the

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² The Scotsman 12 November 1918 p 3

³ The Student 5 November 1918 pp 61-62

⁴ Ibid. 17 December 1918 p 12

Dialectic Society in early November 1919, and the motion, 'That a League of Nations is impracticable at the present stage of civilisation' was heavily defeated by 11 votes to 3.¹ An Edinburgh University Branch of the League of Nations Union was recognised by the Senatus in December of the same year, and the club went on to become one of the best supported of all university societies.

Lord Robert Cecil was one of the main architects of the League, and also president of the British League of Nations Union between 1923 and 1945. He was elected as President of the Edinburgh University Associated Societies in 1920, and the following year granted an honorary LL.D. At his laureation in the MacEwan Hall Lord Cecil stated that, "He had two growing convictions...and the first was that if we were to set up some bulwark against war, there was no other bulwark than the League of Nations which could be trusted to be of any value."² Cecil challenged critics of the League with, "Until you produce some other scheme by which peace can be maintained, until you show us some other way of safety, we will stick by our raft...being well assured that if we desert it and if we allow the last hope of civilisation to founder, we shall not easily answer to posterity our failure and neglect (Applause)."³

One of the principal activities of the League of Nations Union branch at the University was to organise regular 'Model Assemblies' fashioned after the main gatherings in Geneva. At the first of these events in May 1922, "An enthusiastic and receptive audience, numbering well over a hundred, packed to over-flowing the room of the S.R.C."⁴ In a markedly reconciliatory gesture, the main business of the

¹ Edinburgh University Dialectic Society. Draft Minute Book 10th Dec. 1914 - 3d March 1923

² The Scotsman 31 May 1921 p 5

³ Ibid.

⁴ The Student 2 June 1922 p 224

meeting was that Germany should be allowed into the organisation and, “The only opposition came from M. Joubert on behalf of France, who asked Germany to explain the enigma that while she kept troops to keep down communism at home, she made a treaty with Soviet Russia. On Hay explaining that the treaty was purely economic, Germany was unanimously admitted into the League.”¹

The second student League Model Assembly included delegates representing twenty-four different states. They were there to discuss the proposal that, ‘The temporary mixed Commission prepare for the consideration of the next Assembly a definite scheme for the general reduction of land armaments, and draft a mutual Guarantee Treaty to be submitted by the Council to the various Governments, and to take effect when the reduction begins.’² One of the speakers claimed that, “The world wasted 20 per cent of its income on preparations for war. This meant less money for reproductive industry and economy where economy was dangerous. The war has been waged to end war. Let the League take her chance and accomplish what the war had tried, but failed to do.”³ This disarmament recommendation, with a minor amendment, was carried unanimously and The Student coverage of the event further argued that, “Nothing is more patent than this, that the vague general support which consciously or unconsciously the mind of the man in the street gives to the League, awaits only organisation and direction to become a force mightier than armies.”⁴

The Model Assembly which took place the following May was particularly concerned with the recent French military intervention in the Ruhr, and the balance

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¹ The Student 2 June 1922 p 224

² Ibid. 7 December 1922 p 65

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

of opinion was heavily critical of this action. One of the British delegates, “Supported disarmament as the only possible means of real security. Deprecated the French attitude”¹, whilst another stated that, “France was doing everything to oppose the Versailles Treaty, and that the only possible solution of the troubles of the times are the reduction of French armaments, the moral disarmament of all Europe.”²

An inter-debate between the Associated Societies and Celtic Society had already discussed the motion, ‘That France’s attitude in the Reparations Question is economically unsound’. On this occasion Mr R. Morrison, speaking on behalf of the Dialectic Society and in favour of the proposition commented, “The bayonet was not proving a suitable implement for the digging of coal. France was smashing her own credit and ruining Germany.”³ The motion was passed by a majority of 24 to 13.

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The same controversial issue was also discussed at an inter-Union debate with Glasgow University during which the motion, ‘That the present French policy on the Ruhr is Justifiable’ was defeated by 10 votes. Throughout these events Edinburgh students evidently adopted a condemnatory attitude toward perceived French military aggression and concomitantly reconciliatory one in relation to Germany. In 1926 the S.R.C. put its own seal of approval on more friendly international relationships by holding a special reception for a party of students from the German Youth movement.⁵

In any case League of Nations Union assemblies continued to be held throughout the period at hand, and the final meeting of the decade led to the following comment

¹ The Student 23 May 1923 p 212

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁵ Edinburgh University Students’ Representative Council Forty-Fourth Annual Report to Students. November 1927 p 5

in the official student journal. “‘The Student’ is an impartial organ, and the discussion of politics, internationally or otherwise, is forbidden to its contributors. Nevertheless, we feel it to be only fitting that in a University such as this more should be known of the rational as opposed to the irrational means the prevention of war.”¹ Furthermore, “The League of Nations is more than the ephemeral product of the fertile imagination of the Washington evangel. It is the expression of the will to peace; it is the confession of humanity that as an arbiter in disputes war is a contradiction in terms.”²

As well as the League of Nations Union an Edinburgh University International Fellowship which had as its main goal, ‘the creating of good fellowship and understanding of its various members, irrespective of race, colour, or creed’³ was formed in late 1921, and the S.R.C. also gave its full support to the France-based *Confederation Internationale des Etudiants*. The introductory Student editorial claimed that, “Arising out of the recent Conference of the C.I.E., we have had strongly borne in upon us the conviction that the future peace of the world depends very largely upon its students.”⁴ Furthermore, “In what we had occasion to see in the Conference already referred to of the mutual relationship existing between students of many nationalities, one fact stood out in striking relief. It was, that no matter whether men a few short years ago fought shoulder to shoulder or face to face, the fundamental underlying fact of studentship now bound them together in a desire for mutual understanding.”⁵ A student section of the Edinburgh International Club called the Student International Council was also established in 1927 with the aim of “The

¹ The Student, 6 Feb 1929 p 150

² Ibid. p 151

³ The Student, 1 Feb 1922 p 118

⁴ Ibid. 11 May 1921 p 171

⁵ Ibid.

furtherance of international relations in the University and the promotion of the social and academic interests of foreign and overseas students in Edinburgh.”¹

A PhD project entitled The Sentiment of Nationalism was supervised by the Professor of History, Sir Richard Lodge, and the degree awarded by the Faculty of Arts in 1924. This thesis spoke of ‘the paradox of moral consciousness’ which lay at the heart of military preparations for self-defence and hoped to see, “A substantial extension into international affairs of the standards of [peaceful and harmonious] relationships which have been developed within at any rate most of the nation groups themselves.”² Furthermore, “World conditions being what they are, the future of Internationalism...is so obviously bound up with the success or failure of the League of Nations that any attempt to forecast it which did not enter into a wide discussion of particular circumstances would inevitably take on an air of unreality.”³

There was also something of a revival of student interest in organised Christianity after the war. The Operetta House Meetings were a series of informal annual lectures about the religion presented by well-known ministers to the student body, and in 1920 The Student reported that, “These November meetings...are attracting ever-increasing numbers of students, there being a record number of over 500 at the second of the course.”⁴ The S.R.C. organised heavily attended Sunday Services in St Giles Cathedral, the Christian Union represented one of the most active undergraduate bodies throughout the decade, and Edinburgh students sent one hundred and thirty delegates to the national Student Christian Movement Conference of January 1929.

¹ The Student 28 October 1927 p 26

² Cater, J.J., The Sentiment of Nationalism Edinburgh PhD 17 July 1924 p174

³ Ibid. p162

⁴ The Student 24 November 1920 p 68

Eric Liddell (1902-1945) was a science student at Edinburgh University between 1920 and 1924, and also a leading member of the Rugby and Athletics Clubs. At the 1924 Paris Olympic Games Liddell refused to run in his foremost event, the 100 metres, because the heats were held on a Sunday and this would contradict his strong Christian convictions. On the other hand he did go on win a gold medal in the 400 metres, and bronze for the 200.

Throughout the 1920s organised student Christianity was also heavily involved in the promotion of international reconciliation and understanding. For example a book written under the auspices of the Student Christian Movement, The Healing of Nations by Archibald Chisholm and published in 1926, argued that, “Among the nations there is suspicion and conflict, either concealed or overt. High above the conflict and confusion there still stands the Cross passed to His throne, still prays ‘that all may be one’.”¹ In 1928 several student societies combined to organise a ‘Christ and Life Week’ at the university, and as The Scotsman reported one of the invited speakers, Rev Dr A Herbert Gray, spoke on ‘Jesus Christ and Society’. Rev. Gray argued that, “They must learn that all nations brought their contribution to the common life. The only alternative was war.”²

Earlier in the decade The Student coverage of an ecumenical and internationalist meeting held under the auspices of the Christian Union revealed that, “There was very general agreement that the root of the greater part of international and inter-social trouble lies in ignorance...this ignorance, which is the root of all evil, they did wish to overcome, and this, they held, could best be done by meeting informally

¹ The Student 20 January 1926 p 133

² The Scotsman 8 February 1929 p 12

together.”¹ Furthermore, “There was music - strange haunting melodies from the Land of Five Rivers, and the plaintive songs of the Russian peasantry; there were so many speeches - in as many varieties of English.”² The item concluded, “There was difference of opinion on many points, but all were agreed...if the world is to progress, nation must live in peace with nation, and race with race.”³

Continuing on this theme, during his ‘Christ and Life Week’ talk mentioned above Rev. Herbert Gray also argued that, “The kind of society which he called the Kingdom of God had two characteristics. First, it was a society in which every person was recognised; and, secondly one of men who recognised that they were children of the family of God.”⁴ Furthermore, “As Christians they would come up against the question of race. The whites for long had had the idea that they were born to dominate the world, but there was no colour bar in the Kingdom of God.”⁵

Indeed in some contrast to the pre-war period there was at least a degree of opposition to racial prejudice among Edinburgh students during the 1920s. In February 1928 the Student International Council discussed the informal segregation of non-white undergraduates which existed both inside and outside the University. The Student reported that, “Mr J. R. Dogra and Dr S. L. Cramer, of India, described the extent of the ban, and the very bitter feelings it had aroused. In reply, Mr Gavin Martin emphasised that it was due only to the action of a minority, and did not represent educated opinion.”⁶ In any case, “Other speakers followed, and the Council passed the following unanimous resolution: ‘That this Council strongly deprecates

¹ The Student 23 November 1921 pp 55-56

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ The Scotsman 8 February 1929 p 12

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ The Student 8 February 1928 p 143

the Colour Ban, and invites the S.R.C. to endorse this opinion.”¹ Shortly afterwards the Student Representative Council responded with, “At a meeting of the Council held last night, your letter re the Colour Ban was read...The Council approve the findings of the Student International Council on this matter, and desire to associate themselves with the Student International Council in condemning the ban.”²

In November 1927 the Union debated the motion, ‘That Migration Between the Nations of the British Isles should be Controlled’ which focussed on the issue of Irish immigration into Scotland. The Student reported that Mr A Haddon of Edinburgh complained that, “Scotland was doomed to be swamped by Irishmen – and the worst type of Irish at that.”³ On the other hand, “Mr C. Brogan (Glasgow) led for the negative, and claimed to be representative of the Irish scum who had come to Scotland.”⁴ At this event at least Edinburgh students overwhelmingly rejected the anti-Irish racial sentiment which was common during this period in voting 14 to 2 against the motion, or by an 88% majority.

Turning to other expression of generally reconciliatory and peace-oriented sentiment at Edinburgh University, many of the poems written by students in the immediate post-war period were at least partially sceptical about the struggle. For example a collection of verses by an Edinburgh University undergraduate who had served at the front entitled War Daubs was published in early 1920, and subsequently reviewed in The Student.

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The works in this volume concentrated on the harrowing and negative rather than glorious side of warfare, as epitomised by a poem entitled ‘The Corpse’.

¹ The Student 8 February 1928 p 143

² Ibid. 7 March 1928 p 192

³ Ibid. 9 March 1927 p 169

⁴ Ibid.

The Corpse (exert)

It lay on the hill,
A sack in its face,
Collarless,
Stiff and still,
Its two feet bare
And very white;
Its tunic tossed in sight
And not a button there -
Small trace
Of clothes upon its back -
Thank God! it had a sack
Upon its face!¹

In another item the author claimed that: “It is not sweet to die for one’s countree; I saw a dead man stinking in a trench; Where even flies would sicken with the stench; Ah! is it sweet to die for one’s countree?”²

In recognition of her extensive contributions to the WWI military effort the University of Edinburgh was awarded a German field gun by the War Trophies Commission, and this was placed in a prominent position in the Old College Quadrangle. However in July 1922 the S.R.C. made a formal request to the University Court that the gun be removed, and a few months prior to that the following poem was published in The Student.

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Address to the German Gun in the Old Quad

Ye grim auld deevil, how’s yersel?
Oft hae I cursed your snoovin’ shell,
But since ye’ve come wi’ us tae dwell,
Let bygones be!
There’s much in common, strange to tell,

¹ The Student, 4 February 1920, p 105. The author was R. Watson Kerr.

² Ibid.

'Tween you an' me.

Ye maun hae found it unco' queer,
Auld Blood an' Iron, comin' here,
Whaur these grey massive walls austere
Glower on your muzzle;
Weel, mair than you are vexed, I fear,
By that same puzzle.

While doon the street the traffic hums,
While, like the throb o' distant drums,
The myriad voice o' Learnin' burns
Wi' blended drone;
Nae doot tae you remembrance comes
O' days noo flown.
The worm-like maze o' trenches white,
The roarin' day, the unquiet night,
The shell, the soarin' signal light,
The pitted plain,
The ordered squalor o' the fight
Come back again.

Though here sits Reason, throned in state,
An' spins her spider-web elate,
Secure frae besom-stroke o' Fate
In cloistered glory:
Yet grimly here your time to wait -
Memento mori!

An' I can aiblins hear you say:
*'Thus was it on anither day;
Thus did you mortals preach an' pray
Sae glib an' cheery,
Till in your douce, weel-ordered way
Dang tapselteerie!*

*On Learning's mouth I clapped a hand,
Your sons came forth at my command,
An' all you prayed for, preached and planned,
My voice made crumble -
An' noo, nae wiser do ye stand,
And nae mair humble!*

Weel, weel, auld Roosty, bide you there;
A captive's lot is hard to bear;
But tell the sage in ilka chair
That your dread reign,
Their auld, unaltered phrases fair,

Will bring again.¹

This unusually subversive piece was written by William Shepherd Morrison (1893-1961), who attended Edinburgh University between 1912 and 1922, taking time out to fight in France during World War One. He received a Military Cross for valour, and at Edinburgh was variously President of the Philomathic, Celtic and Dramatic Societies, President of the Unionist Association, and in session 1920-21 Senior President of the S.R.C. After leaving university with a degree in law he became a well-known Conservative MP, then Minister of various departments in the Ramsay MacDonald, Stanley Baldwin, Neville Chamberlain and Winston Churchill governments. After a period as Speaker Morrison quit the House of Commons in 1959 and was created Viscount Dunrossil of Vallaquie. His final official appointment was as Governor-General of Australia in 1960, and he died in office the following year.

Morrison was granted an honorary LLD by Edinburgh University in 1938, and at his laureation the poem about the German trophy gun was alluded to with the somewhat barbed comment, “Many of us recall the attractive personality of the Argyllshire lad, who returned to his studies after four years’ campaigning in France, decorated with the reward of his valour, and sharing with many others in the same case a mood of bewilderment, aptly voiced in the verses he addressed to the German gun in the Old Quadrangle.”²

Another overtly anti-war poem appeared in the student paper in December 1923. ‘From the World’s Lost Legion’ claimed that those who had gone “fiercely forth to

¹ The Student 14th July 1921 p 232

² Edinburgh University Laureation Addresses LLD The Right Hon. W.S. Morrison, M.C., K.C., M.A. (Edin.), Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries 20 July 1938

die” hoped that “dwellers in the world of men” would “Harbour old hatreds in our grave; Lest wars return again.”¹ Later in the decade, ‘The Soldier’s Dream’ adopted the critical stance towards senior commanders involved in WWI common at the time in claiming that, “In battle was the only joy; Of Major-General James de Ploy; He loved the battle’s deadly roar; (His name you may have heard before.); Ten miles behind the Line he stayed; With Major Edward Enfilade; Whom he had made his right-hand man; Devising his defensive plan.”²

Looking now at relevant debating results, in October 1920 the Diagnostic Society rejected the motion, ‘That the War to End War has been Followed by the Peace to end Peace’, and the following year there was a major Inter-Union debate with the University of Durham which discussed the topic, ‘That there is no Escape from the Burden of Armaments.’

One of the speakers for the amendment, Mr J. H. Herbert, “Maintained that to prepare for war was to secure war. Exemplified the amity of America and Canada as showing what armaments could not effect. Pleads for a better understanding of League of Nations”³, whilst R. Sneddon, “Exploded the argument of the vice inherent in human nature. It was the business of all education to alter and uplift the human mind.”⁴ In any case the vote was 57 to 32 against the motion, which represented a significant majority in favour of at least some degree of disarmament.

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Another Union debate took place in February 1925 discussing the motion, ‘That the Sermon on the Mount can be applied to Politics’. The relevant statements attributed to Jesus in the Gospel of Mathew included the injunctions to ‘resist not

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¹ The Student 11 December 1923 p 107

² Ibid. 21 November 1928 p 91

³ Ibid. 23 November 1921 p 46

⁴ Ibid. p 47

evil’ and ‘turn the other cheek.’ He also called upon people to ‘love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you’, and claimed that ‘blessed are the peacemakers.’ At the social and political levels the Sermon on the Mount was generally taken to imply a pacifistic and non-violent ethic, and as such was central to the philosophies of anti-war campaigners such as Leo Tolstoy and Mahatma Gandhi.

In any case one of the proposers of the motion, “Admitted at first sight the acceptance of the Sermon looked impossible, [but] so had the abolition of the Slave Trade”¹. Another proponent, Loudon Cunningham, argued that, “Though we have all inventions and all progress, we are nothing if Christian love is left out.”² D.F. Francis similarly claimed that, “The Sermon is the whole Christian doctrine in a nutshell. As a public duty we must promote such a doctrine.”³ The voting result was 23 to 3 in favour of the motion, in other words nearly 90% of those attending this meeting endorsed a broadly pacifistic proposal.

Toward the end of the decade there was a small number of overtly pacifism-based letters printed in The Student. For example in November 1928 a student responded to the previous week’s special Officers’ Training Corps edition of the journal by pointing out that, “The last war you admit was hideous and ghastly - since then further developments of the science of destruction have made it so much more so that in the event of another world-war civilisation would probably be wiped out. To look forward to another world-war is to anticipate the suicide of civilisation.”⁴

‘H. S.’ then challenged one of the standard arguments of the time in favour of the

¹ The Student, 11 March 1925 p 187

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid. 21 November 1928 p 75

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continuing need for military alertness in asserting that, “Your opinion that military efficiency...may prevent future wars, even were the League of Nations to fail, seems to be a very biased view.”¹ Furthermore, “In these days of growing international understanding, we are learning to realise that the peoples of the world do not desire war - it is misgovernment and misunderstanding which sow the seeds of war.”² He also directly criticised both the Officers’ Training Corps and its promotion by the student paper, claiming that, “It seems obvious that the O.T.C. can only enjoy itself by ignoring thoughts of what it is preparing for. This is most aptly illustrated by the report of the Summer Camp at Buddon: ‘Nothing is more satisfying than to be able to report...‘Enemy all killed, sir.’”³ The correspondent concluded, “Anybody who can write this is either ignoring the fact that he is preparing ‘to kill all the enemy’ in reality, or else he is taking a most devilish delight in wholesale murder. It is obvious that the latter is not true. The truth is that training in the O.T.C. shows nothing of the dread realities of war, and is thus likely to give a wrong impression of it, and precipitate another holocaust.”⁴

The following year a correspondent adopted an overtly religious approach to the issue in stating that, “In the ‘Student’s Handbook’ this year, I notice that one of the institutions which all students are recommended to join is the O.T.C. Why this should be it is difficult to understand, and I take this opportunity of warning our ‘Freshers’ against joining such a war-like body.”⁵ The writer continued, “Surely every true Christian must know that it is wrong to kill one’s fellow-creatures; hence it is easy to assume that all devices to kill one’s fellow-creatures are wrong, and what

¹ The Student 21 November 1928 p 75

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ The Student 5 November 1929 p 86

else is an O.T.C. than a device to teach men how to kill their fellow-creatures?"¹ The correspondent, 'Peace on Earth', concluded, "And it is up to all University students to assist their country - to be true patriots by doing their bit to help to stop all war, and all war-like institutions which lead to war. Let O.T.C.'s fade into insignificance - set an example to the world, of peace and good fellowship."²

In the same edition of The Student 'B.S' took a more personally critical stance in arguing that, "Surely no one now believes that preparation is prevention...Doubtless, as the writer of that Leader says, 'It is hard to be able to refuse to fight,' but the O.T.C. can only help to foster this moral cowardice, the presence of which, in almost every man, I venture to think is the greatest obstacle of all to universal peace."³ The final pacifism-based letter of the period at hand again condemned the Officers' Training Corps, claiming that it, "Preserves in young men's minds that instinctive enthusiasm for warfare which...will continue to make the youth of to-day think that fighting is fun, the same idea that made the youth of 1914 flock out to France to be massacred."⁴ The author also challenged a previous correspondent in arguing that, "Mr Morrison...seems to think that because it seems impossible to end war, we should give up trying. At one time it seemed impossible to fly."⁵

Turning now to broadly militaristic influences and activities, the conclusion of hostilities in late 1918 were marked out not only by spontaneous joyful celebrations of peace, but a whole series of triumphalist and laudatory official ceremonials and statements. As will be covered in greater detail in the next chapter King George V visited the University just ten days after the signing of the Armistice. The Scotsman

¹ The Student 5 November 1929 p 86

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. 5 November 1929 p 87

⁴ Ibid. 27 November 1929 p 192

⁵ Ibid.

reported that, “Sadly depleted though the ranks of the graduates and under-graduates have been by the demands of both the Army and Navy, there was still a large and representative gathering of students in front of the grey old building when the Royal carriage appeared.”¹ Furthermore, “Lining the street there was a full muster of the Officers’ Training Corps of the University, some 300 strong...along with full sixty ex-service Army and Navy Officers (graduates and students) the majority in uniform.”²

At the first Graduation after the war in December 1918 the Principal Sir J. Alfred Ewing commented that, “Those who had returned to the University, and those who were going back to civil life, had won many honours. Members of the University had to their credit at least two awards of the Victoria Cross (applause) at least 96 awards of the Distinguished Service Order, and he believed, at least 528 Military Crosses, 17 of which were with the bar.”³ Furthermore, “Many other honours had been given to members of the University, not only by our own Government; but by those of our Allies, and it was a significant fact of the share that the University had taken in cementing the alliance that there should have been 18 awards of the *Croix de' Guerre* (Applause).”⁴

A few months later the British Commander-in-Chief Field Marshall Sir Douglas Haig was invited to the University to receive an honorary degree, and The Scotsman again covered the occasion. “Prior to entering the hall, the Field-Marshal inspected a guard of honour of the University Officers Training Corps, under the command of Major C. O. D. Preston, D. S. O. S. F. A. The other officers on parade were Capt. R.

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¹ The Scotsman 22 November 1918 p 6

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. 19 December 1918 p 6

⁴ Ibid.

Gentles (infantry unit), Lt. E. H. Ablett (artillery unit), and Lt. R. L. Galloway (medical unit.).”¹ Furthermore, “The large hall, with its magnificent galleries, was crowded in every part, and Sir Douglas and Lady Haig were given a reception the tumultuous warmth of which visibly embarrassed them. Following prolonged cheering, the whole audience, led by the students, joined in singing ‘For he’s a jolly good fellow’”²

In awarding the honorary degree the Dean of the Law Faculty, Professor James Mackintosh, stated, “This is indeed a proud moment in the annals of our University. We are honoured by the presence of the gallant soldier who has trained and commanded, with consummate military skill, the greatest armies the Empire has ever sent into the field, and has led them to decisive victory over the most formidable forces over arrayed for the enslavement of Europe.”³ Furthermore, “We are privileged, here in the city of his birth, to add our paeon of praise and thanksgiving to the great chorus that is echoing through the land in his honour. In Roman fashion, we may well salute him as the modern *Germanicus*, who has baulked the Prussian eagle of its destined prey, tamed its haughty spirit, clipped its wings, and cut its cruel claws.”⁴

The Student described the occasion with somewhat less formality but still great pride, commenting that, “At noon, behold, those which teach the young men in the Temples reached the Hall, wearing robes of many colours, and with much swank; and after them came Duggi the Boss. And when the young men saw him, they leaped to their feet with a *click*, and lifted up their voices in a mighty shout so that the Hall

¹ The Scotsman 29 May 1919 p 7

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

trembled upon its foundations.”¹

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A large proportion of the students present at this laureation were in uniform, indeed both those who had had their studies interrupted and members of the armed forces in general were encouraged to take up places at the institution in the immediate post-war period. This group of former soldiers largely accounts for the more than doubling of the student population between 1918 and 1920 from 2083 to 4643, as implied by a report of the Principal and Deans Committee in 1920. “With the return of students from the War, the demand for additional accommodation for the practical teaching of certain subjects has become so acute that building operations have had to be undertaken without delay.”¹

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The first Armistice Day after the war was commemorated both by a two minute silence throughout the University and a laudatory poem in the student paper entitled ‘Remembrance’. This piece stated that, “The city’s heart lay silent – wondrously; Twice sixty quiv’ring moments, all too dear; A glimpse of those long past, a pageant near; Alive with souls who met Death, thund’rously; Ah! Death, on them thou laid’st unfading flowers; Thy victor, they, they ever shall be prais’d;...They have a throne amid the deathless stars.”⁴ Individual student societies also adopted a generally eulogising approach to the war and its casualties, for example at a special reunion

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dinner held by the Celtic Society in February 1920, “The chairman proposed the health of the King, upon which the National Anthem was sung; then in a few appropriate words he gave ‘The Glorious Dead,’ which was honoured in silence.”⁵ Another participant toasted the Imperial Forces then, “Spoke of the unthinkable debt

¹ The Student, 6 June 1919 p 142

⁴ The Student, 28 October 1920 pp 23-24

⁵ Edinburgh University Celtic Society Minutes 17 January 1920 – 12 March 1927

owed by all present to the unsleeping vigilance of the silent service, to the valour and experience of the Army, and to the wonderful exploits of the Air Forces. He referred particularly to the Highland regiments and to Edinburgh's own units.”¹

A special ‘War Memorial’ edition of The Student was produced in May 1920 and included a full listing of the approximately nine hundred members then known to have died in active service. The sixty-four page volume also looked at the university's many different war-related activities and included articles on the Officers' Training Corps, Edinburgh University Women and the War, the Scottish Horse Field Ambulance, and Edinburgh University Indian Ambulance Corps. There were personal contributions from all the main University officials including the Lord Rector, Chancellor and Principal, as well as national figures and alumni such as Field Marshall Haig, the Minister of Pensions the Rt. Hon. Ian Macpherson, Sir Auckland Geddes, President of the Board of Trade, and the famous author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

The introductory editorial stated that, “It is with some diffidence and a distinct sense of its inadequacy that we at last present this War Memorial Number of ‘The Student’ to a critical public - a Number which is utterly insufficient to perpetuate the services of the members of our University in the greatest war in history.”² The University Chancellor Lord Balfour further maintained that, “It is fitting that ‘The Student’ should turn its thoughts to those members of our University who have given their lives for their country and for mankind. No part of the United Kingdom has acquitted itself more splendidly than Scotland, and in Scotland none have deserved

¹ Ibid.

² The Student, 28 May 1920 pp 3-4

better of their country than the University of Edinburgh.”¹

Sir Alfred Ewing echoed these sentiments with, “By no persons, perhaps, was the call of the war more clearly heard, more promptly and more generally obeyed, than by the members of the universities. And it may be doubted whether in any university the response was more instant than in Edinburgh, on the part alike of students, of graduates, and of the staff.”² Sir Auckland Geddes was an Edinburgh graduate and then British Ambassador to the United States, and he commented, “The drama of the war was the spiritual struggle between nations, and it seems to me that the most intense part of the titanic struggle was that between the soul of Britain and the soul of Germany....In the final war memorial those and only those who reinforced by will, by determination, the soul of Britain, will stand as victors.”³

Later in the same year the second Rector selected during the war, Admiral David Beatty, was finally able to present his Rectorial Address as well as receive an honorary degree. This represented another great set-piece celebratory event for the student body, as The Scotsman reported. “Edinburgh University signalised in memorable fashion yesterday an outstanding occasion in her long history...There was a mutual sense of honour in the day’s proceedings, in which one of the greatest schools was associated with one of the greatest sailors of our time.”⁴ The undergraduates were evidently in a celebratory mood as, “With its high and festive spirits, the occasion was like Armistice night in the city concentrated under one roof. They heartily sang choruses, they floated balloons and threw paper darts and

¹ The Student, 28 May 1920 p 9

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ The Scotsman 29 October 1920 p 7

streamers from the balconies, and they used a miscellany of missiles.”¹ Furthermore, “Occasional showers of beans, peas and barley, paper balls, and confetti made mixed ‘weather’ for those who sat below, but through it all was a general good humour, hearty and happy. The entry of their Lord Rector, with his academic robes over his naval uniform, evoked such a scene of enthusiasm as can rarely be witnessed. The members of the general platform party filed through the hall from the rear, and last came Lord Beatty with Principal Sir Alfred Ewing, preceded by the Mace. The assembly rose en masse and cheered wildly.”²

On granting the honorary LLD to Lord Beatty Professor Mackintosh commented that, “His predecessors in that office had advanced the interests and the reputation of the University in many varied ways: it had been his unique task to fight for her very existence, and to preserve by his brilliant naval prowess her independence and usefulness unimpaired for generations to come.”³ Furthermore, “Under Providence, they owed their security above all to the British Navy and its illustrious Commander-in-Chief. They were all familiar with the moving story of the gallant Admiral’s exploits...they witnessed at their very doors the supreme triumph of sea power when he received the inglorious surrender of the German Fleet.”⁴

As The Student report indicated Admiral Beatty’s address itself closely followed the central theme of Captain Mahan’s The Influence of Sea Power Upon History (1890) mentioned before. Lord Beatty stated that, “The lessons of sea power cannot be learnt too early, and even amongst the hard work of your undergraduate days you can find time to understand how sea power has created and made prosperous the

¹ The Scotsman 29 October 1920 p 7

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

greatest empires in the history of the world.” Furthermore, “We have established a great world-wide Empire...It is a trust, a heritage, which has been handed down to us for safe keeping from the days of the great Elizabethan adventurers - Gilbert, Raleigh, Drake, Hawkins, Frobisher, Davis, Grenville, and Cavendish. We have to prove ourselves worthy by maintaining it inviolate.”¹

A bound volume containing listings not only of the university casualties, including photographs where available, but all those other members who had taken a direct part in Britain’s war effort was published in March 1921. The Student promoted this book with, “In its ‘Roll of Honour’ the University...presents an offering to her sons, and seeks to put on record for all time her just pride in those children of hers, who in the hour of danger went forth, some, alas, to fall, some to return with many honours, and all to do their duty.”²

This phase of major post-war official commemorations reached its climax with the opening of the University War Memorial in the Old College Quadrangle by Lord Balfour in February 1923. The event took place amidst full academic, religious and military panoply and the student magazine remarked that, “The old buildings have looked down upon many impressive scenes, but none more than that when the University did honour to those nine hundred and forty-four alumni who had ‘turned without fear or question from these gates of learning to those of the grave in order that free men might still continue to have freedom.’”³ The Scotsman reported that Lord Balfour, after acknowledging the overwhelming sense of loss felt by the deaths of hundreds of University members commented, “How can I describe what we have gained by their death? We have gained, in the first place, freedom from an

¹ The Student 28 October 1920 p 18

² Ibid. 26 May 1921 pp 189-190

³ Ibid. 1 March 1923 p 145

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overwhelming menace. We have gained, in the second place, a fresh body of tradition and memory which is going to be the strength and inspiration of future generations.”¹

In October 1920 the Prime Minister David Lloyd George won a decisive victory in the Rectorial election, and his prominent wartime role was fully emphasised in the material promoting his candidature. “Abroad, however, he is regarded by allies and enemies as one more example of *the hour* [original italics] of trial producing from Britain *the man* [original italics] to guide her destinies to triumph. It is a feat unparalleled, this rise of Lloyd.”²

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Furthermore a month after the unveiling of the War Memorial, in March 1923, Lloyd George visited the University to give his Rectorial Address, and the war remained the central focus of his speech. Lloyd George’s main theme was the importance of democracy and its politicians in relation to morale during times of conflict. The Prime Minister claimed that, “There was no one in Germany to arouse the patriotism of the people, to raise their spirits, to infuse iron into their blood, to inspire them to endure hardships, to face anxieties, to bear growing burdens. You may say it was the failure of the system. That is true.”³ Furthermore, “In this war free democracy in France, Belgium, Italy, America, and Britain showed it had greater powers of endurance than autocratic or semi-autocratic government in Russia, Austria, and Germany. And for the work of free democracy the politician was essential.”⁴ He further encouraged the students to take up politics as a career, arguing that, “He who feels a call to serve his country and generation in politics is seeking a hard but high vocation. There is no other career except one in which a man who is

¹ The Scotsman 20 February 1923 p 4

fitted for it and devotes his energies to its tasks can do more for mankind.”³

By the time of his address Lloyd George had already been replaced as Lord Rector by the Conservative leader Stanley Baldwin. In his own Rectorial speech of late 1925 Baldwin, by then Prime Minister, in fact adopted a notably more reflective and regretful tone in relation to warfare, paying particular attention to the lower standards of honesty and general morality inevitably involved. The Student reported Baldwin as claiming that, “Ever since States began to be they have been in peril and have trusted to force for their safety. War has been their normal history. Savagery has never been far away from the realm of law.”¹ Furthermore, “With war and the preparation for war come the stratagems of diplomacy, the dropping of the ordinary codes of morals, a holiday for truth, and an aftermath of cynicism. Force and fraud are in war the true cardinal virtues, wrote the author of ‘Leviathan.’”² Baldwin further claimed that “the ice of civilisation” had “rotted and cracked during the agony of the Great War”³, and called upon the students to vigorously support the League of Nations as a means to avoid future conflicts.

On the other hand the Rector who succeeded Stanley Baldwin in October 1927, Sir John Gilmour (1876-1940) was then Secretary of State for Scotland but best known for his previous martial exploits. The Student pointed out that, “Sir John is a Scot and...a soldier by nature and in bearing. As an officer of the Fife and Forfar Yeomanry, he served with distinction in the South African War, and again with the same regiment in the European or Great War, becoming Lieutenant-Colonel, and continuing in command when the regiment was dismounted and formed into the 14th

¹ The Student 1 March 1923 p 140

¹ Ibid. 6 November 1925

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

Battalion, The Black Watch.”¹ Furthermore, “He was awarded a D.S.O. and bar for services in Sinai and Palestine, being wounded and put out of action at Beersheba in November 1917.”²

In his Rectorial Address of 1927 Sir John Gilmour drew together many health and fitness related, imperialistic and overtly militaristic ideas. The Scotsman reported the Rector as stating that, “There is another and most important branch of your activities which I must not omit. I have a profound belief in the value of games and physical training in every form as an adjunct to University life.”³ Furthermore, “Comparing the state of athletics in the University to-day with what it was in my time, I find many notable improvements to record, including the acquisition of excellent playing fields, the growth of an active women’s branch of the Athletics Club, and, last but not least, the establishment of a strong Officers’ Training Corps.”⁴

Sir John emphasised the Imperial dimensions of the institution claiming that, “Our University and our Empire are of exactly the same age, for it was in 1583 that the Town Council of Edinburgh levied the first assessment for ‘the College at the Kirk-of-Field’.”⁵ He also touched upon the contemporary eugenicist issue of the ‘unfit’ claiming that, “There are few visitors to the Swiss mountains who are not haunted by the memory of cretinism. It is estimated that there are 50,000 of these imbecile dwarves in the beautiful valleys where their presence is so incongruous.”⁶

The martial background of the final Lord Rector installed during the period at hand, Winston Churchill, was again fully emphasised by The Student following his

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¹ The Student 28 October 1927 p 4

² Ibid. 28 October 1927 p 5

³ The Scotsman 29 October 1927 p 12

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ The Scotsman 29 October 1927 p 12

election in late 1929. The piece stated that, “No one can deny his capability. As Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has said, ‘He did as much for Great Britain in the years of desperate need as any civilian, save Lloyd George.’ The Dardanelles plan was a brilliant conception, ruined by the failings of others.”¹

Looking again at one of the main themes raised by Sir John Gilmour in his Rectorial Address, the Students’ Representative Council began to campaign in favour of improved health and fitness facilities at the University shortly after the end of the war. “The Students’ Representative Council considers it the duty of all sections of the University to encourage and assist the University Athletic Club and all reasonable outdoor recreation...the Council do therefore urgently request the Senatus so to arrange classes that Wednesday afternoons be kept as free as possible in all Faculties.”²

The S.R.C.’s official Student publication and various individual clubs such as the Celtic Society also heavily promoted health and fitness activities among students throughout the decade. Furthermore a major Union debate over the motion ‘That Physical Exercise, With Medical Examination, should be made Compulsory in the University’ was held in February 1927, during which, “Mr C.P. Beattie (motion), as befitted a military gent, took the imperial outlook and just refrained from quoting ‘the playing fields of Eton.’”³ In any case the proposal was passed by 31 votes to 15, or a 67% majority.

There was also some interest in the outdoor pursuits and general nature-eulogisation which would become extremely popular during the 1930s, for example

¹ The Student 10 December 1929 p 217

² Edinburgh University Students’ Representative Council Minute Book No.9 19th June 1913-25th February 1920

³ The Student 9 February 1927 p 146

an article entitled 'Suggestions for the Vacation - Walking Tour' was published in The Student in June 1922. This argued that, "To travel the open road in spring is a pastime for the gods, and indeed when you return from such a journey you will be one with the gods in ways that you had hardly deemed possible...You will discover your kinship with the earth that bore you; you will feel and you will answer the call of the mother earth, out of whose veins comes your blood."¹

The various articles in The Student and elsewhere promoting health and fitness in general and the Athletics Club in particular frequently interlinked these activities with membership of the Officers' Training Corps. For example in October 1928 an editorial argued that, "There are three outstanding undergraduate institutions - the S.R.C., the Athletic Club, and the Officers' Training Corps. All these, besides the Unions, are emphatically worth each student's support. Athletics need no recommendation, nor should the O.T.C. to anyone who cares to think that the Government deserves some return for the help it gives the University to educate them."²

This close relationship between the promotion of health and fitness and contemporary campaigns to improve the condition of young men for any possible future military conflicts was further emphasised by Colonel Percy Lelean, holder of the Chair of Public Health at Edinburgh from 1926. The following year he gave the inaugural address to the Edinburgh University Education and Psychology Society, and The Scotsman reported him as stating that, "The old-fashioned idea that the doctor should fight disease, while the average man did nothing for himself but relied on his protection, died hard; but it must be killed outright. Of the full adult

¹ The Student 16 June 1922 p 242

² Ibid. 28 October 1928 pp 1-2

population during the war, only 35 per cent were fit for the frontline.”¹ Furthermore, “Professor Lelean then put on the screen numerous tables of statistics to show that as regards bad teeth, malnutrition, rickets, mental deficiency, and general sickness, the nation was still C3.”² The Professor concluded, “Let them teach all [children] physiology, teach the boys how to keep fit and the girls how to cook and shop to the best advantage.”³

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An interest in other at least partially social-Darwinian ideas also began to reappear in the mid 1920s. As discussed before one of the main objectives of the eugenicist project was to implement a national policy of birth control and enforced sterilisations in order to prevent the procreation of the ‘unfit’, and thus improve ‘racial’ and general national fitness. Two of the most heavily attended Union debates of the period at hand discussed the motions, ‘That a Policy of Birth Control is in the Best Interest of the Race’ and, ‘That this House approves Birth Control’ in November 1924 and February 1929 respectively.

The first proposal was carried by a majority of 71 to 61 whilst during the 1929 discussion one of the speakers declared, “It was not Nature’s way to produce the mental defective and the physically unfit. Nevertheless it happened, and if we are to support Nature’s ideal we must use material methods.”⁴ On this occasion the pro eugenicist motion was endorsed by an even heavier majority of 57 to 23, or 71% of the meeting.

There were also a few indications among students at this time of an endorsement of the sort of Marxism-influenced ideas and policies which would become popular in

¹ The Scotsman 20 October 1927 p 11

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ The Student, 6 March 1929 pp191-192. See Appendix I for a complete list of relevant debates during this period.

the following decade. For example during a debate over 'The King's Speech' in 1923 The Student reported that, "J. L Gray stood humbly in the vanguard of the revolutionary movement...[He] Desired the scrapping of the Versailles Treaty as false and immoral, and advocated an International Economic Conference and a State (by no means a private capitalistic) loan to Germany."¹ The following year an inter-Union debate with Cambridge University discussed the motion, 'That Socialism is a Moral and Economic Necessity' and the student magazine commented that, "A.M. Lamond (motion) thought Capitalism was the greatest system of gambling in human souls known. The boss wanted everything and nothing else."²

It is also evident that the University Labour Club, formed in 1920, was noticeably more Left-leaning than its parent political organisation. James K Annand (1908-1993) was a student of English and History at Edinburgh between 1926 to 1930, and also a member of the Labour Club committee. He later explained that his father had taken him to weekly Communist Party meetings at Pringles Palace cinema on Leith Walk where he had listened to Marxist activists such as Willie Gallacher and J. S. Clarke.³ Whilst at University Annand became further disillusioned with the Labour Party because of the "Jiggery-pokery...Left and Right disputes, and so on"⁴ which he perceived to be a feature of it.

In particular Annand pointed out that after the University Labour Party opposed moves by the local Trades Council to block the appointment of Communists as trade union delegates he received a rebuking letter from the leader of the national Party. Ramsay Macdonald stated, "May I take the opportunity of expressing my regret that

¹ The Student 1 March 1923

² Ibid. 2 December 1924 p 108

³ MacDougall, Ian (ed) Voices from War and Some Labour Struggles. Personal Recollections of War in our Century by Scottish Men and Women Edinburgh: The Mercat Press, 1995 p 184

⁴ MacDougall, Ian (ed) Voices from War p 185

I have heard from a Member of the Edinburgh Trades Council that the first activity of the enlivened University Labour Party has been to raise the question of Communist affiliation. I think you would be very well advised to concentrate on your own immediate subjects and problems.”¹ MacDonald also turned down an approach from the student Labour grouping to become their candidate in the 1929 Rectorial election, stating, “I have now completed some enquiries about the Rectorial election and its chances, and I am sorry to say that my friends almost unanimously advise me against risking nomination.”² Furthermore, “Both they and I are perfectly willing to face a defeat, but what we have been doubtful about is whether my face could be saved by polling such a respectable vote as would at any rate give me second place. Their opinion is that this is so very doubtful that I am not justified in helping you at such a great risk.”³

Another prominent member of the Edinburgh University Labour Club during this period was Jennie Lee (1904-1988). Lee was born in Cowdenbeath, Fife, came from a relatively impoverished mining background and was only able to take up her place at Edinburgh in 1922 due to a grant from the Carnegie Trust. Jennie Lee then became both Treasurer of the student Labour club and its spokesperson on the Student Representative Council. One of her close friends was A. W. Mackintosh, who was elected as Chairman of the University Labour Club with the support of its Marxist contingent, and himself later joined the Communist Party in the 1930s.

Many of the members of the University organisation were extremely active both inside and outside the University, as Jennie Lee pointed out. “We did not confine our proselytising to fellow students. Off we would go to the Mound in Princes Street or

¹ Acc 4190 Annand, J. R. Letters 1928-1929 Letter from Ramsay MacDonald dated 21 January 1921

² *Ibid.* Letter from Ramsay MacDonald dated 23 January 1929

³ *Ibid.*

to a suitable stance in the Meadows. And one after the other try our apprentice hand at public speaking. Another plot was to visit those churches which after the sermon on Sunday evenings invited everyone interested to stay on for a discussion session.”¹

Lee was the editor of a short-lived Labour Club publication known as *Rebel Student* which supported the failed candidature of Bertrand Russell in the 1923 Rectorial Election. Perhaps the most significant experiences of her time at Edinburgh University, however, revolved around the General Strike of May 1926. Her biographer Patricia Hollis pointed out that, “With a few other members of the Labour Club, Jennie rushed down to the trade-union headquarters in Edinburgh to offer help. She was given the job of receiving and dispatching orders for the strike bulletins, sending nearly twelve thousand of them out every day by motorcycle to the West Lothian mining villages.”² Furthermore, “Throughout Scotland hundreds of people were arrested and imprisoned. Tempers ran high...Mac [A. W. Mackintosh] was thrown down the steps of the Union for his unpatriotic behaviour by an old school friend, and told not to show his face there again.”³

Jennie Lee herself further emphasised these deep divisions among students by pointing out that, “When the 1926 General Strike began, a few students found their way to Hillside Crescent, the Headquarters of the Edinburgh Central Strike Committee, but the great majority were on the other side. Some were vicious. I heard one young fellow with whom until then I had been on quite friendly terms say that what he would like to do was drive a tank down Cowdenbeath High Street.”⁴

In any case the national strike was quickly called off, and shortly afterwards

¹ Lee, Jennie *My Life with Nye* London: Jonathon Cape, 1980 p 33

² Hollis, Patricia *Jennie Lee A Life* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997 p 21

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Lee, *My Life with Nye* p 42

Jennie Lee left Edinburgh with both an MA and Law degree. She went on to become one of the most prominent politicians of the twentieth century, winning the seat of North Lanark for the Independent Labour Party in the 1929 General Election and becoming the youngest Member of Parliament at the time. She opposed the formation of a National Government under Ramsay MacDonald in 1931 and lost her parliamentary seat in the election of the same year following the withdrawal of the I.L.P. from the Labour Party. Jennie Lee married the Labour MP and future Minister of Health Aneurin Bevan in 1934, and both supported the formation of a militant united socialist front during the Spanish Civil War. Lee returned to the Labour Party after World War Two, winning the Cannock seat in Staffordshire and going on to become Minister of Arts under Harold Wilson in 1964. In this position Jennie Lee was one of the main architects of both the Open University and South Bank Centre in London. She lost her parliamentary seat in 1970, was elevated to the House of Lords as Baroness Lee of Ashridge, and died in 1988 at the age of eighty-three.

As indicated above the vast majority of Edinburgh students in fact opposed the 1926 General Strike, indeed a large number of them took a direct part in strike-breaking activities. With the full approval and encouragement of the University Senatus the S.R.C. set up an 'Emergency Committee' which organised the more than two thousand undergraduates who volunteered for extra-curricular duties such as tram-driving, dock-work and participation in the Special Constabulary.¹ An Edinburgh student was directly involved in the worst incident of the strike in the city when a train collision resulted in several fatalities. As The Scotsman reported, "An official inquiry by the Ministry of Transport into the railway accident which occurred

¹ University of Edinburgh Senatus Academicus. Printed Minutes Volume IV Oct. 1924 to July 1928
pp 303-304 and The Student, 2 June 1926 pp 234-238

on Monday at St Margaret's Tunnel, Edinburgh, on the London and North-Eastern Railway line, was carried through yesterday in the North British Station Hotel, Edinburgh. Three people were killed as a result of the accident and a number injured.”¹ Furthermore, “The driver of the refuse train and the fireman, Edward Griffiths, a medical student at the University of Edinburgh, then gave evidence.”²

The Student also provided extensive coverage of the strike, pointing out that those who worked on Edinburgh's trams were in the main treated in a friendly manner. “The general public did all in their power to help us, even accepting a dog-ticket when the supply of penny ones ran out! Many an encouraging word and friendly clap did they give us, and they never murmured when a car or a bus stopped to take aboard a supply of pies and ‘liquid nourishment’.”³ On the other hand service with the ‘Special Cops’ could be more hazardous, with the student paper explaining, “We weren’t welcomed, in the ‘A’ Division at least, with a friendly smile from the inhabitants on our beats. Their greeting mainly consisted of presents in the form of stones, bottles, jugs, and even, in special cases, of a stove, a rum jar (empty!), a fender, &c.”⁴

The patriotic and quasi-military dimensions of this undergraduate response to the National Strike were also emphasised by the magazine. The student intervention was claimed to have helped ensure “the failure of an unwise attempt to paralyse the vital services of the country.”⁵ The piece continued, “In hundreds they came - men and women from all faculties, of all interests - led by those social servants of whom we have spoken: the men and women of the S.R.C. - of the Unions - of the Athletic

¹ The Scotsman 15 May 1926 p 4

² Ibid.

³ The Student 2 June 1926 p 237

⁴ Ibid. 2 June 1926 p 238

⁵ The Student 2 June 1926 p 238

Clubs - of the O.T.C. These great stalwarts have added fresh laurels to their record of service. They have a magnificent record in the recent emergency.”¹

Looking now at another ideological influence on students during this period, many of the set texts used in courses such as History and International Law and covered in the previous chapter were swiftly revised to take World War One into account. Tout's Advanced History of Britain claimed that, “The greatest war in history was the result of the claim of Germany to dominate the world and the inevitable resistance which such a pretension excited.”² Furthermore, “The wholesale destruction of non-combatants, both enemies and neutrals, was, however, part of the deliberate policy of ruthlessness by which Germany believed she would terrorize the world into submission.”³ The historian claimed that Britain was, “Impelled by interest and honour to support France and Russia from wanton attack, she was doubly bound to stand forth as the protector of a weak state like Belgium, and to vindicate the sanctity of international law against the doctrine that might makes right.”⁴

J. R. Green likewise argued in his Short History of the English People that, “The lamentable war of 1914, the greatest catastrophe that has ever befallen the human race, has proved that throughout the British Islands as in the Colonies there is no widespread or deep-seated deterioration, either physical or moral.”⁵ Furthermore, “That the spirit of dogged resistance to tyranny and the ineradicable love of justice are still present in the children of a race which...has yet attained to a greater measure

¹ Ibid. p 237

² Tout, T. F., An Advanced History of Great Britain. From the Earliest Times to 1918 London: Longmans, Green and Co. 1920 p 744

³ Ibid. p 756

⁴ Tout, An Advanced History of Great Britain p 748

⁵ Green, John Richard, Short History of the English People London: Macmillan and Co. 1916 p 841

of freedom combined with security than any other state has known.”¹

Lord Birkenhead’s International Law pointed to German responsibility for the initial introduction of illegal weapons such as poison gasses and flame-throwers into the conflict, whilst a new book by James Wilford Garner used in the International Law course claimed that, “Much [of the destruction in northern France] was sheer vandalism and appears to have been done in the spirit of wantonness and revenge.”² The author further argued that this was, “Entirely in accord with the doctrines of the German militarists that war is a contest not merely against the armed forces but against the civil population as well, that violence, ruthlessness, and terrorism are legitimate measures.”³

A new course was introduced into the Arts curriculum in 1921-22 entitled Historical Geography, and the recommended books tended to fully maintain pre-war nationalistic, imperialist and racially supremacist positions. Geography and World Power by James Fairgrieve claimed that, “Africa, long occupied only by barbarous peoples, unknown and unexplored because of the geographical conditions, has lately naturally and inevitably been partitioned among the peoples that matter.”⁴ H. B. George’s Historical Geography of the British Empire further maintained that, “The British empire exhibits the dominant race in almost every possible relation to other races...In India there is a miniature world, comprising many different races, some with very ancient civilisations of their own, some almost savages, and of many intermediate grades. And the whole is held together, constrained to peace and order,

¹ Ibid.

² Garner, James Wilford International Law and the World War London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1920 p328

³ Ibid.

⁴ Fairgrieve, James, Geography and World Power London: University of London Press, 1920 p 281

by an army of English officials, civil and military.”¹

Turning finally to direct expressions of support for militarism among students, there was little mention of the Officers’ Training Corps in the student newspaper during the immediate post-war years. In November 1921, however, The Student reported an O.T.C. Reception held by Principal Sir Alfred Ewing in the Old College Upper Library Hall at which Professor Hudson Beare stated that he, “Did not anticipate abolition of war in the immediate future, and endorsed previous remarks about the value of the O.T.C. to the man himself, the University, and the nation.”²

The following year the annual O.T.C. Church Parade included contingents from local private schools as well as the University and overall involved over eight hundred cadets. The Student reported that, “The Cathedral was filled by a large congregation, which included Lord Provost Hutchison, members of the Town Council, representatives of the High Constables of Edinburgh, members of the Court, Senatus, and Students’ Representative Council, Lieut.-General Sir F. J. Davies, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., commanding the Forces in Scotland, and Lieut.-Colonel C. de C. Etheridge, C.B.E., D.S.O., Secretary to the Edinburgh Territorial Force Association.”³ The item concluded with, “The service was marked by the strong support given to it by the student body, and it is to be hoped that succeeding services will receive similar support.”⁴

In October 1923 a long and eulogising article entitled ‘O.T.C. Summer Camps’ appeared in the student paper and ended with the query, “Are you a member of the Infantry Unit? If not, why not? The O.T.C. Camp is one of the finest events of the

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¹ George, H.B., Historical Geography of the British Empire London: Methuen and Co, 1904 p 8

² The Student 3 November 1921 p 20

³ The Student 2 June 1922 p 229

⁴ Ibid.

University year. Drop in at High School Yards and see the O.C. - then be one of us next year.”³ Thereafter The Student continued to heavily promote the Officers’ Training Corps through regular coverage of its activities and promotional editorials, all culminating in a special O.T.C. edition of the paper in June 1925. The articles included again concentrated on the unit’s various camps, and the approach adopted throughout was that of a light-hearted emphasis on the sociable and leisurely aspects of membership rather than any overtly military ones. For example, reporting on the O.T.C Spring Camp at Montrose the writer claimed that, “The prevailing spirit was one of holiday...Already the reputation of a camp to which this account has done poor justice has become widespread, and recruits for all units are wisely taking their last opportunity for joining this year.”¹

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The piece entitled ‘Camp Life in the O.T.C’ pointed out that, “Camp life is undeniably attractive...There is the thrill of walking abroad in different clothes, in different surroundings, with different companions, and altogether living a different life. And after it is all over - the return home, feeling wonderfully fit and hearing people say, ‘How sunburnt you are!’ (all handsome men are slightly sunburnt).”² The last relevant item in the edition was simply called ‘Life in the O.T.C.’ and did acknowledge the underlying purpose of the unit. The article contended that, “Perhaps there will be no more war. Perhaps the lesson of the last conflict, the lesson that war brings nothing but loss - material, moral, and intellectual - loss to victor and vanquished, to labour and capital, to soldier and civilian - has sunk so deeply into

¹ The Student 10 June 1925 p 291

² Ibid. p 265

³ Ibid. p 271

men's hearts that it will be remembered for all time.”¹ On the other hand, “There is a possibility that things may turn out otherwise, and the risk of war is still a thing that must be reckoned with and that must, as a matter of practical common sense, be insured against.”²

This item again concluded by emphasising the recreational aspects of O.T.C. membership in pointing out that, “It is at camp that ‘Life in the O.T.C.’ assumes a real meaning. But how to describe it? To work long hours in the open air, busy with a multitude of tasks; to spend long evenings exactly as one chooses, free of all care of the morrow; to sleep dreamlessly in a tent till morning - what, after a year of town and classes and exams, could be more desirable than this?”³

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The editorial of the special edition of the paper was entitled ‘Men of Action’ and as was so frequently the case inter-linked membership of the O.T.C. with that of the Athletics Club. “It is our conviction that a whole hemisphere of the University world is shut off from you unless you join the ranks of the men of action. Joining the Athletics Club and the O.T.C. is an action you are never likely to regret.”⁴ It also contrasted a purely intellectual academic life with the practical and more exciting nature of sporting and military activities. “We introduce something real, something we can grip on to - from a hockey stick to the reins of a Battery horse - into our lives...This is not achieved by the morbid workings of gloomy introspection.” There was something of a subtle challenge in the concluding, “The ranks of the men of action welcome every one - except cranks.”⁵

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¹ The Student 10 June 1925 p 271

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid. p 274

⁵ The Student 10 June 1925 p 274

Another edition of The Student dedicated to the Officers' Training Corps was produced in November 1928, by which time outright pacifism was widely popular in the country as a whole. The Editorial responded to this trend by claiming, "Perhaps a reader declare himself a Pacifist; yes but we should be very much surprised if all the members of the O.T.C. were not 'Pacifist' in the best sense."¹ This basic argument was in fact one most commonly put forward at the time to counter the anti-war agitation, that strong defences and preparations for warfare were the best safeguard against any actually breaking out.

The editorial continued, "If ever the League of Nations completely fail, if ever the Kellogg Pact be in danger of being flouted, military efficiency may yet prevent the nations from plunging into war. Military efficiency should be a warning - a sort of international '*Nemo me impune lacesset*.'"² The item concluded with the usual exhortation for students to join the O.T.C. stating, "We have written thus much to show clearly the primary importance of the Officers' Training Corps, to bring before those of our readers who may be thinking of joining one of the four unites the most unanswerable argument for doing so."³

Furthermore the small number of pacifism-orientated letters published in The Student at the end of the decade and outlined above were heavily outnumbered by those endorsing patriotic and warlike values. One such response in late 1928 claimed that, "So long as the old Adam is present, and certain people hold, and are ready to enforce, ideas subversive to the body politic, and there are elements at home and abroad who welcome complete disarmament as making their own subsequent arming

² Ibid. 7 November 1928 p12

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

more effective, so long would it be national suicide to drop our second line of defence.”¹ Another letter adopted a humorous approach stating, “As to the rest of Pussyfoots arguments, I will not attempt to deal with them... ‘Let O.T.C.’s fade into insignificance,’ indeed! Swords into scalpels! Uniforms into scarecrows! Tanks into hencoops! Shells into flowerpots! Mine floats into beer bottles! How nice!”²

Looking now at relevant debating results, the trend toward the end of the 1920s in fact ran counter to the anti-war implications of the 1925 discussion on ‘The Sermon on the Mount’ covered above. In November 1928 the topic ‘That this House Deplores the Influence of Lead Soldiers in the Young’ was defeated by 62 votes to 54 at an Inter-debate with the Canadian Universities Debating Team. Furthermore the final Union debate of the 1920s discussed the directly relevant motion, ‘That the O.T.C.’s of the British Universities are detrimental to the interests of World Peace’, and this was rejected by 32 votes to 24, or a 60% majority.

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Not surprisingly membership of the Officers’ Training Corps had declined sharply after the conclusion of World War One. As Table 4 below reveals the wartime peak of 392 cadets in 1917-18 fell by around 20% to 324 the following year, and was down to 193 in 1919-20.

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However the various patriotic and militaristic propagandist efforts and general ideological influences on the part of both the University authorities and official student body outlined above appear to have been successful, as the table also illustrates that membership of the Officers’ Training Corps had fully recovered to its wartime levels by the end of the 1920s.

¹ The Student 28 November 1928 p 116

² Ibid. 19 November 1929 p 134

Table 4: University of Edinburgh Officers' Training Corps Membership 1917-1933¹

Year	Membership
1917-18	392
1918-19	324
1919-20	193
1920-21	235
1925-26	358
1927-28	352
1932-33	385

In conclusion, the ending of World War One and return of students from the fighting resulted in a combination of great celebration and a series of at least partially regretful and critical items printed in the student newspaper. There was a sharp decline in membership of the Officers' Training Corps, and in 1922 the Student' Representative Council requested that the German trophy gun be removed from the Old College Quadrangle. During the early 1920s the newly-formed University League of Nations Union proved to be one of the most popular student societies, results from debating results showed some degree of support for disarmament, and in March 1925 a large majority voted in favour of an essentially pacifistic motion based around the Sermon on the Mount.

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The latter part of the decade saw a retreat from interest in political and ideological affairs in general, and The Student took on a notably more frivolous and light-hearted tone. The relatively relaxed social atmosphere of the time can be gleaned from the following advert. "The Bohemian Dance Club' Swinton Row. "Dancing every night from 10 PM to 4 AM, including Sundays. Suppers and breakfasts. Dress

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¹ Figures obtained from The Student, The University of Edinburgh Senatus. Signed Minutes, and a private interview with the current Adjutant of the City of Edinburgh Universities Officers Training Corps

always optional. Garage accommodation. The best dance music in Edinburgh. No racial or class distinction.”¹ To some extent this simply reflected a trend both in British society as a whole and at higher educational institutions in particular. The historian R. D. Anderson pointed out that at Aberdeen University, “The atmosphere in the 1920s was in some respects hostile to a serious interest in politics. As editor of Alma in 1921-22, Eric Linklater set a tone of unrelenting heartiness and frivolity which was to persist throughout the 1920s.”²

There was an upsurge in support for pacifistic ideas in Britain as a whole during the late 1920s, and this was reflected in a small number of letters published in The Student. However to a large extent these items were simply used to provoke the much more voluminous pro-war correspondence and articles which followed, indeed throughout the decade both the university authorities and official student bodies were engaged in vigorous efforts to increase interest in and support for the Officers’ Training Corps. The success of these campaigns can be seen in both the dramatically increased O.T.C. membership over the period at hand (see Table 4 above), and debating results from the latter part of the 1920s which reversed the earlier anti-militarist trend.

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A pivotal year in this transformation of mood was 1926. As mentioned above over 2,000 Edinburgh University students volunteered for strike-breaking duties during the General Strike which took place in May of that year. These activities brought them into close contact with state authorities in general, and the armed forces who coordinated many of the anti-strike measures in particular.

Perhaps more significantly, throughout the period at hand potted biographies of

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¹ The Student 7 May 1928 p 259

² Anderson, The Student Community at Aberdeen 1860-1939 p 98

many of the major officials of the S.R.C. and Union were published in [The Student](#) under the heading 'Lights - Leading and Misleading'. For example in 1924 the life and background of Fraser M Rose, one of the S.R.C. Junior Presidents, was covered with, "Rose has been a roving lad. Nine years of a wild life in Canada, and then he set out for civilisation - but stopped at Stornoway. What he got up to we won't ask you to imagine, but his departure from that 'distressful' island was hasty, and his destination Gallipoli and Salonika. He was there no more than two or three years when he made the end of the war an excuse to come all the way back again."¹

After 1926 no such war-related exploits are mentioned in the series, so it would seem reasonable to suppose that thereafter none of the major student representatives had seen active service during World War One; indeed by implication that few if any war veterans were still in attendance at the institution. Taking into account the ideological progression outlined above, therefore, the argument can be made that during the time span covered by this chapter the students at the University of Edinburgh who adopted the most critical and reluctant stance towards warfare were those who had actually taken part in it.

¹ [The Student](#), 11 June 1924 p 324

Chapter Four. The 1920s and 1930s: Staff

To the King's Most Excellent Majesty, May it Please Your Majesty, We, Your Majesty's loyal subjects, the Chancellor, Rector, Principal, University Court, Senatus Academicus, General Council, and Students of the University of Edinburgh, humbly tender to Your Majesty an expression of our fidelity and devotion, and our dutiful and most cordial greetings on the occasion of Your Majesty's visit to the capital of Your ancient Kingdom of Scotland. With hearts full of thankfulness we beg leave to offer Your Majesty our congratulations on the glorious conclusion of the War. We recall with pride that many members of this and other Scottish Universities have taken an honourable part in the struggle, and we rejoice to recognise in the signal victory achieved by Your Majesty's Forces the triumph over barbarism of those lofty ideals of liberty and humanity which it is the endeavour of Your Universities to inculcate and uphold. It is our humble hope that a new era is dawning in which all peoples under Your rule will be drawn yet closer together, and it is our heartfelt prayer that You may long be spared to reign over a prosperous and united Empire.¹

On 21 November 1918, just ten days after the signing of the Armistice that brought World War One to an end, King George V paid an official visit to the University of Edinburgh. The victorious monarch was greeted with full academic and military panoply, as described in *The Scotsman*. "The ceremony of presenting a loyal address from the University was conducted at the carriage entrance to the quadrangle off the South Bridge. Sadly depleted though the ranks of the graduates and undergraduates have been by the demands of both the Army and Navy, there was still a large and representative gathering of students in front of the grey old building when the Royal carriage appeared."² Furthermore, "Lining the street there was a full muster of the Officers' Training Corps of the University, some 300 strong, in command of Major J. B. Mackenzie, adjutant, along with fully sixty ex-service Army

¹ Edinburgh University Court Signed Minutes Volume XII 15th May 1916-19th July 1920 pp 385-386

² The Scotsman 22 November 1918 p 6

and Navy Officers (graduates and students), the majority in uniform.”¹ The piece continued, “Just prior to the arrival of Their Majesties, the Professors of the University, preceded by servitor carrying the mace, walked in procession from the robing room to the entrance.”² The whole occasion culminated in the reading of the loyal address cited above by the Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Sir James Alfred Ewing. A lithographed copy on vellum of this speech signed by Sir Alfred as well as the Chancellor, Rector and University Secretary was also presented to the King.

This event was followed in May 1919 by a Memorial Service for the University’s war dead held in St Giles Cathedral. The introductory National Anthem was followed by a hymn which spoke of, “A glorious band, the chosen few; Who met the tyrant’s brandished steel; A noble army, men and boys; In robes of light arrayed; They climbed the steep ascent of heaven; Through peril, toil, and pain.” The programme for the service listed those University members killed in action under the heading ‘Dulce et Decorum est Pro Patria Mori’.³

This generally laudatory tone on the part of the University authorities continued throughout the immediate post-war period and culminated in the unveiling of a University War Memorial in February 1923, another major commemorative event attended by all the principal officials and members of staff. A comprehensive Roll of Honour was published in 1920, and in the same year the Senatus resolved that on each Armistice Day all ten o’clock classes should be brought to an end five

¹ The Scotsman 22 November 1918 p 6

² Ibid.

³ Secretary’s Box Files Box 222 VG Miscellaneous: War Memorial. Roll of Honour and Correspondence with Relatives and General 1914-1935. Pamphlet: Edinburgh University Students’ Representative Council. Memorial Service for Graduates, Students, and Alumni of the University who have fallen in the War in St. Giles’ Cathedral on Sunday, 11th May 1919 at 3.30 P.M.

minute early and the College Bells rung to signal a ten minutes silence.¹ Furthermore as mentioned in the previous chapter the University authorities were awarded a captured German field gun by the War Trophies Commission in 1919, and subsequently displayed the piece prominently in the Old College Quadrangle.

By way of some contrast, in January 1931 Sir Alfred Ewing's successor in the post of Principal, Sir Thomas Henry Holland (1868-1947), and forty-two other members of the University staff publicly endorsed a document which stated that, "The undersigned men and women, irrespective of party, stand for world disarmament....convinced that competition in armaments is leading all countries to ruin without bringing them security."² However by November 1936 an 'Anti-Gas' air-raid precautionary class had been introduced into the medical curriculum, and three years later the University authorities again played a full administrative role in the national military effort. This chapter will therefore look at relevant opinions and activities of officials and teaching staff at Edinburgh University during the 1920s and 1930s to attempt to illuminate and explain this progression of general support from one World War to another.

After the end of WWI the Edinburgh University Chancellor and British Foreign Secretary Lord Balfour took a leading role in the negotiations which led up to the Treaty of Versailles. Though less harsh than the French delegation had sought the terms of this pact were certainly punitive, with Germany being required to acknowledge sole guilt for instigating the war, lose a great deal of both domestic and overseas territory, and pay substantial reparations. Balfour resigned the post of Foreign Secretary shortly after the Versailles Conference but remained in the

¹ University of Edinburgh Senatus Academicus. Printed Minutes Volume III Oct 1920 – July 1924 4 November 1912 pp 31-32

² The Scotsman 23 January 1931 p 3

government as Lord President of the Council from 1919-22 and again 1925-29. Not surprisingly as one of its main instigators and military directors Balfour vigorously defended and eulogised the First World War, and especially the role Edinburgh University had taken in it. For example he sent a message to the special commemorative edition of The Student published in May 1920 which concluded with the statement, "Ours losses have been great, and, in a sense, are irreparable. But lives spent in a great cause are never truly lost; and those who are left behind may gain a perpetual inspiration to noble deed from the memory of the glorious dead."¹

In February 1923 the Chancellor officiated at the unveiling ceremony for the University War Memorial in the Old College Quadrangle, and on this occasion he pointed out to the large audience present that, "Before 1914 there may have crossed the minds of some observers a suspicion...that the progress of civilisation, the growth of material wealth and comfort, the pursuit of all these lower objects might have touched and injured the fibre of our race."² Lord Balfour continued, "If that thought was ever, as I think it was, seriously entertained, it can be entertained no longer."³ He concluded, "Our history is a history of great deeds, but in all that history no greater national performance, no national performance comparable in patriotism, gallantry, and sacrifice shown by every section of the community, every class, every age, no deed comparable to that stands out upon our historical record."⁴

Balfour's health declined in the latter part of the 1920s, his final visit to the University was to attend a laureation in 1927, and he died in 1930. The General Council selected the Scottish playwright Sir James Matthew Barrie (1860-1937) to

¹ The Student 28 May 1920 p 9

² The Scotsman 20 February 1923 p 4

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

be his successor. Barrie generally avoided overtly political or ideological statements during his time as Chancellor, though he did make his opposition to both totalitarianism and extreme nationalism clear in an article published in the University Journal in 1932. Barrie claimed that, “[In the USSR and Italy] the student from the earliest age is being brought up to absorb the ideas of his political rulers. Nothing can depart more from the Scottish idea, which I take to be to educate our men and women primarily not for their country’s good but their own, not so much to teach them what to think as how to think, not preparing them to give as little trouble as possible in the future but sending them into it in the hope that they will give trouble.”¹

Sir James Barrie passed away in June 1937 and was succeeded to the Edinburgh post by another literary figure, John Buchan (1875-1940). Buchan was a former Unionist M.P. for the Scottish Universities constituency and at the time of his elevation to the Chancellorship Governor-General of Canada, for which position he had been awarded the title Baron Tweedsmuir. During World War One John Buchan had worked for both the War Propaganda Bureau and British Army Intelligence Corps, and his well-known spy novels from this period such as The Thirty-Nine Steps (1915) were staunchly patriotic and imperialistic. His literary output also contained occasional examples of the racially derogatory ideas common at the time, for example the book The Three Hostages (1924) included the lines, “A nigger band, looking like monkeys in uniform, pounded out some kind of barbarous jingle, and sad-faced marionettes moved to it.”² Furthermore, “Round the skirts of the hall was the usual *rastaquouère* crowd of men and women drinking liqueurs and champagne,

¹ The University of Edinburgh Journal Volume IV Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd 1933 p 9

² Buchan, John, The Three Hostages Oxford: Oxford University Press 1995 p 101

and mixed with fat Jews and blue-black dagos the flushed faces of boys from barracks or colleges who imagined they were seeing life.”¹

During the 1930s Buchan was an enthusiastic supporter of Captain Basil Liddell Hart’s campaigns to improve the efficiency of the British Army by means of streamlining and mechanisation, and the greatest controversy of his period as Governor-General of Canada was brought about by a speech in favour of re-armament given shortly after his elevation to the position. His biographer Janet Adam explained that, “Trouble came with a speech which Tweedsmuir delivered on 3 September [1935] at Calgary. He was addressing the Alberta Military Institute, a group of service people and their friends who met occasionally for lunch and a speech.”² Furthermore, “To this specialised audience he spoke of defence, saying that the breakdown of the League of Nations had compelled every democracy, however unwillingly, to give some attention to defence questions and that Canada could be no exception: ‘No country is safe from danger. No country can be isolated. Canada has to think out a policy of defence and take steps to implement it.’”³

Not surprisingly as Governor-General of Canada Buchan was unable to visit Edinburgh University often, on one such occasion in July 1938 he spoke to a gathering of newly installed honorary graduates in the Old College Upper Library. The Chancellor alluded to both the spread of totalitarianism and generally deteriorating international situation when he argued that, “The curse of to-day was the arrogance of people who maintained that they had the only wisdom. There was nothing so much needed to-day as manly humility - what the Bible knew as reverence and Godly fear. The other quality was humour - the power above all to

¹ Buchan, The Three Hostages p 185

² Adam, Janet, John Buchan London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1965 pp 395-296

³ Ibid.

laugh at yourself.”¹ He continued, “They were cursed to-day by too many bogus Messiahs, who maintained that their creed was the divine revelation. The true answer to that kind of folly was, not so much argument, as laughter - Laughter was the great weapon...If they could preserve those two great qualities of humility and humour in their Universities, he believed they would save civilisation.”² Baron Tweedsmuir died shortly after World War Two broke out in February 1940, still holding the titles of Governor-General of Canada and Chancellor of the University of Edinburgh.

Turning now to the University Principal, Sir James Alfred Ewing was primarily responsible for the instigation and supervision of the many official post-war celebratory and commemorative events touched upon above. Furthermore in his contribution to the special war-related edition of The Student of May 1920 the Principal stated, “The way of duty was plain; few indeed could or did mistake it...their trained vision helped them to see early what soon became patent to all, that this war, forced upon us against our will, was no mere conflict of national aims, that the task of the Allies was nothing less than to save from disaster the Christian spirit of civilisation.”³

Like many others, however, Sir Alfred Ewing’s views on the war and international affairs in general altered considerably as the 1920s progressed. In October 1927 the Principal of the University proposed the vote of thanks at a League of Nations Union meeting on the subject of disarmament and stated that, “He thought the main function of the League was not so much to prescribe a policy as to create an atmosphere. It was to open the windows of Heaven upon the stuffiness of nationality

¹ The Scotsman 21 July 1938 p 8

² Ibid.

³ The Student 28 May 1920 p 11

to allow a breath of fresh air to come in.”¹ Furthermore, “During the late war, as the war went on, they were continuously progressing in the ghastly talent and art of destruction. Worse and worse became the methods of warfare; farther and farther they were proceeding from the old, comparatively humane, comparatively gentlemanly ideas of the ancient chivalry of war; more and more fatal were they becoming as regarded their effect not only upon the combatant forces, but upon the innocent, the stay-at-homes, the women and children.”² Sir Alfred Ewing concluded, “If ever again they had such a war it would be on a scale of a thousandfold more destructiveness, more brutality – it would mean, he believed, the very death of civilisation.”³

The following year the Principal presented a lecture to the Institute of Civil Engineers entitled ‘A Century’s March: Men and Machines’. As reported in The Scotsman he maintained the anti-war theme outlined above stating that, “He had thought that the assiduous study of engineering could not fail to soften [humanity’s] primitive instincts; that it must develop a sense of law and order and righteousness.”⁴ However, continued Ewing, “The war came, and he had realised the moral failure of applied mechanics. It was a shock to find that a nation's eminence in this department of intellectual effort did nothing to prevent a reversion to savagery, conscienceless, unbridled, made only the more brutal by its vastly enhanced ability to hurt.”⁵ Sir Alfred concluded, “Collective moral sense, collective political responsibility, the divine maxim to do to others as we would that they should do us - these were lessons

¹ The Scotsman, 8 October 1927 p10

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., 5 July 1928 p 9

⁵ Ibid.

a respect of which all the nations, even the most progressive, had still much to learn.”¹

Sir James Alfred Ewing retired the year after this speech was given, and died in Cambridge in January 1935. As indicated above the Senatus selected Sir Thomas Henry Holland to be his successor as Vice-Chancellor and Principal. Holland was born in Cornwall and became a prominent academic and practical geologist, including time spent as Director of the Geological Survey of India (1903-1909). He took up the post of Professor of Geology and Mineralogy at Manchester University in 1910 then returned to India in 1916 as President of the Indian Munitions Board. Holland was also a Captain in the Calcutta Volunteers between 1891 and 1903, Commandant of the Manchester University Officers’ Training Corps, and between 1911 and 1913 a member of the Royal Commission on Navy Fuel and Engines. His last position before accepting the Edinburgh Principalship was that of Rector of Imperial College of Science and Technology in London.

Like his predecessor by the late 1920s Sir Thomas Holland was investigating possible means to avoid future international conflicts. Shortly after his appointment to the Edinburgh University post he wrote an essay entitled The Mineral Sanction as an Aid to International Security² which argued that an effective means for averting warfare might lie in cutting off the supply of the raw materials required for armaments from any potentially warring nations.

The proposal was at least partly inspired by the recently signed Kellogg-Briand Pact, and in a newspaper article of January 1930 on the subject Sir Thomas explained that, “The real problem [in seeking to avoid war] is to discover some instrument

¹ The Scotsman 5 July 1928 p 9

² Holland, Sir Thomas H., The Mineral Sanction as an aid to International Security Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd 1935

which can be used promptly, without interference in food, clothing, or other civil necessities.”¹ He continued, “We want some instrument as simple as taking away the sparking plugs of a road-hog motorist, without otherwise damaging his car...Something indeed that will force any nation to appeal to the League of Nations before much blood is spilt: some embargo so obviously effective that no nation will even attempt mobilisation.”² Though never fully put into practice the proposals in The Mineral Sanction were highly influential in relation to the development of the concept of economic sanctions in general.

As mentioned previously the new Principal also put his name and authority behind a statement printed in The Scotsman in early 1931, and this represents the most significant expression of anti-war and pro-disarmament sentiment among members of the University staff during the inter-war period.

Forty three members of the staff of the University of Edinburgh, including the Principal, seventeen professors, thirteen lecturers and twelve assistants, wardens of hostels &c., have signed a declaration to the following effect, which is being circulated for signature to people of all countries for submission to the statesmen assembled at the forthcoming World Disarmament Conference:-

The undersigned men and women, irrespective of party, stand for world disarmament. They are convinced:

That competition in armaments is leading all countries to ruin without bringing them security;

That this policy renders further wars inevitable;

That wars in future will be wars of indiscriminate destruction of human life;

That the Governments’ assurances of peaceful policy will be valueless so long as those measures of disarmament are delayed that should be the first result of the Pact for the Renunciation of War.

The document is being signed in the belief that there is no more potent inducement to war than a competition in armaments by various nations, not necessarily hostile to one another, but afraid of what a well-armed neighbour might do (as Lord Salisbury before the war, Lord Grey and Lord Cecil since the war, among others, have emphatically warned us); and also from the conviction

¹ The Scotsman 30 January 1930 p 6

² Ibid.

that no Conference will dare to do much unless it feels itself supported by the general feeling among the various nations.¹

On the other hand The Mineral Sanction as an Aid to International Security was not entirely pacifistic in content and did allow for the possibility of continued warfare justified from a conventionally nationalistic perspective. Sir Thomas claimed that, “One can be sure that if these two [the British Empire and the United States] in alliance ever declare war on a nation it will purely be for the purpose of preventing that nation’s aggressive activity.”²

The Principal also offered up a vigorous support for the University Officers’ Training Corps throughout his period in office, indeed shortly after the publication of the disarmament declaration the student newspaper reported that, “A recruiting tea-party, given by the Officers’ Training Corps on Friday, 23d October, was addressed by Principal Sir Thomas Holland. The large attendance augured well for the future of the Contingent despite its sufferings in the cause of economy”³

Sir Thomas also fully backed the drastically increased provision of health and fitness facilities that were introduced into the University during the 1930s, indeed implied that some of the relevant activities might become compulsory. In November 1936 an item in the journal of the Edinburgh University Athletics Club pointed out that, “The meeting of the General Council once again revived the bogey of compulsion. With regards to physical education Sir Thomas Holland said that he was not YET [original capitals] prepared to consider compulsion, but the whole tone of his speech seemed to indicate that such a measure might yet be contemplated.”⁴

¹ The Scotsman 23 January 1931 p 3

² Holland, The Mineral Sanction as an aid to International Security p 36

³ The Student 3 November 1931 p 53

⁴ Varsity Athletic News No. 94 5 November 1936 p. 7.

As mentioned before there were pronounced nationalistic and militaristic dimensions to the inter-war health and fitness movement in Britain, which was at least in part inspired by knowledge about the poor condition of recruits during World War One. This general climate in turn had an influence on Edinburgh University, and in July 1921 a major fifteen acre site at Slateford was purchased for the provision of athletic facilities.¹ Furthermore in October 1926 the University Court appointed a Committee whose remit was, “To consider and report on the question generally of the provision of facilities for student athletic activities and their adequate supervision.”²

The resultant major Constable Report of June 1927 recommended that Wednesday afternoon classes should be suspended to allow for university-wide participation in sports, that all undergraduates be subject to voluntary medical examination, and that a new full-time official be appointed to supervise all health and fitness related activities at the institution. The document further insisted that the new Director of Physical Training, “should be an ex-Army or Naval Officer”³. The Senatus Education Policy Committee set up to implement the Constable Report also recommended that the First Matriculation Form should contain a new question asking students whether they intended to join the Officers’ Training Corps. The Senatus body suggested that in general, “greater emphasis be laid on the O.T.C. as an alternative to games etc.”⁴

Most of the above recommendations were implemented, and in early 1930 Colonel

¹ Edinburgh University Court Signed Minutes Volume XIII 20th October 1920-16th July 1924 p 340

² Ibid. p 378

³ Ibid. p 506

⁴ University of Edinburgh Senatus Academicus. Printed Minutes Volume IV Oct. 1924 to July 1928 pp 627-628. The full contents of this Report is contained in Appendix 1

Ronald B. Campbell, C.B.E., D.S.O., was appointed to be Edinburgh University's first Director of Athletics and Physical Training. Campbell was born in 1878 and fought in both the Boer and First World Wars as a member of the Gordon Highlanders. During WWI he was appointed as Superintendent in charge of Physical and Bayonet Training, and in 1918 made overall Inspector of Physical Training for the British Army.¹

In the course of his tenure at Edinburgh University Colonel Campbell mainly selected other ex-army Physical Training Instructors as his assistants, and his underlying Social Darwinist and martial approach to health and fitness can be gleaned from the following comment in The Student. "It is during joyful romps, carried out in a spirit of play, that a puppy develops those qualities which later in life enables him to pull down his quarry and hold his prey in a deadly grip. In the early history of our race, when we lived more in touch with Nature, youth played at hunting and killing, for as man he would have to take life in order to maintain life."²

As will be covered in greater detail in the next chapter Campbell inaugurated a series of 'Assaults-at-Arms' in the MacEwan Hall in February 1931. These colourful pageants were held annually until the outbreak of World War Two and designed to illustrate, "the excellence and variety of physical training available in the University."³ There were student performances of gymnastics, fencing, boxing and sword-dancing, and the Officers' Training Corps played a prominent role throughout

¹ Usher, Colonel C. M. (ed.), The Story of Edinburgh University Athletic Club Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1966 pp 10-11

² The Student, 24 May 1932 p 395

³ Ibid 19 April 1934 p 275

by way of pipe band parades and demonstrations of “lightning drill executed with admirable polish and precision.”¹

The University continued to introduce major new sporting and fitness related facilities throughout the 1930s. A female playing field and pavilion complex at Craiglockhart was opened by John Buchan on 18 March 1931, a new gymnasium set up in Minto House in Chambers Street the following year, and in 1937 another group of exercise rooms based in The Pleasance were donated to the University by Sir Donald Pollock.²

Many individual members of staff heavily promoted health and fitness measures, and indeed the frequently inter-linked theory of eugenics which became increasingly popular during the 1920s and 1930s. Colonel Percy Samuel Lelean was appointed to the Chair of Public Health and as Director of the Usher Institute in 1925. The John Usher Institute had been established in 1902 as a combined research and educational unit and it quickly became central both to the University’s medical curriculum and the city of Edinburgh’s general health provisions. Lelean himself came from a strongly military background. During the Boer War he was a surgeon with the Royal Army Medical Corps, and in WWI acted as Assistant Director of Medical Services for the Egyptian Expeditionary Force.

During the First World War Colonel Lelean also took part in important research into poisonous gases. As The Scotsman reported, “Professor Lelean was at the head of a small band of workers at the Royal Army Medical College, and did highly important work – almost living in the gas chamber. Without his help in this way the

¹ The Student 19 April 1934 p 275

² EU Court, Signed Minutes. Volume XVII. 26 October 1936 - 15 July 1940 Sir Donald Pollock had also acquired a 2.5 acre site with the intention of constructing swimming baths and an athletics track, but only succeeded in completing the gymnasium before the outbreak of war.

troops would not have been sufficiently protected in the period before the small box respirator was designed.”¹ Immediately prior to his Edinburgh appointment he was Professor of Hygiene at the Royal Army Medical College.

The new Professor of Public Health at Edinburgh made his commitment to the improvement of national fitness, at least in part for militaristic reasons, clear from the outset. An introductory piece in The Student pointed out that, “There cannot be two opinions that Professor Lelean stands for progress, and for the betterment of national physical life. It is bad enough to be assured that we are still a C3 nation, but surely it is worse to be reminded of the golden opportunities to a higher standard that we have let slip. He speaks with no uncertain voice of the ‘warning lessons’ of the war.”² Lelean further emphasised this point in his inaugural lecture the following year, as reported in The Scotsman. “The tragic outbreak of war forced us to take stock of our available man-power and to classify men of military age. The position was thus forcibly summarised that of every nine men of military age in Great Britain, on the average three were fit, two were on a definitely infirm plane of health, three could almost be described as physical wrecks, and one, the remaining man, was a chronic invalid with a precarious hold upon life.”³

Colonel Lelean combined his promotion of national fitness with that of eugenics throughout, for example in a speech entitled ‘The Mind and Health’ presented in the McLellan Galleries, Glasgow in March 1927 he stated that, “It appeared desirable that the weak-minded of certifiable degree should be in institutions, because they could more surely be prevented from breeding; good organisation could develop their

¹ The Scotsman 16 December 1925 p 8

² The Student 16 June 1925 p 259

³ The Scotsman 21 April 1926 p 11

maximum utility, and they would almost certainly be happier with their fellows.”¹ Furthermore, “Sterilisation was quite feasible, with practically no risk of interference with physiological functions.”²

At a graduation ceremony in July 1933 the Professor of Public Health queried whether the British people should be, “Content that human scum of all the ages should continue to seep down into the clean, clear, wholesome springs, grossly polluting the stream of life at its very source? They might see a great national awakening to that enormity and a storm of' resentment that would put a ruthless end to the promiscuous riot of the half-wits, the defective, the syphilitic in the sacred groves.”³ He concluded with an appeal to his student audience that, “Theirs was the youth whose age would see the unchecked curse mature; theirs were the hands to hold to-morrow's power and force the necessary action.”⁴

In the late 1930s the Government inaugurated a National Fitness Campaign which was at least in part related to contemporary fears about renewed international conflict. Professor Lelean took a direct role in this official movement, and generally reverted to his own previous emphasis on improved health and fitness in readiness for possible conflict. In an article published in The Scots Independent in February 1937 Professor Lelean stated that, “He had no sympathy whatever with those people who were so blinded by their antipathy to a Scot ever having to fight for his country that he would rather he should be unfit than become fit with the possibility of ever being called upon for patriotic service.”⁵ Furthermore, “We are refusing two recruits out of three...Germany, with her system of fitness and training, is passing four out

¹ The Scotsman 9 March 1927 p 9

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. 20 July 1933 p 13

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ The Scots Independent, February 1937 p 10

of five. Professor Lelean suggested that a transformation in national physique might be contributed to by attendance at summer camps for six months being a condition of adolescents drawing unemployment pay.”¹

During this period Lelean also emphasised the dangers posed by aerial bombardment and consequent need for vigorous and extensive national air-raid precautions. As will be covered in greater detail in the next chapter he introduced an ‘Anti-Gas Drill’ to his medical classes as early as 1936, and this aroused a degree of controversy and opposition among students. A few weeks before the outbreak of war in September 1939 Lelean presented a lecture for Edinburgh’s air-raid warden at the Usher Institute on methods of dealing with incendiary bombs. The Scotsman reported that, “Colonel P. S. Lelean, director of the Institute and Professor of Public Health at Edinburgh University, who directed the demonstration, envisages the possibility of some 80 fires being created by one bomber over the city. He believes that householders themselves may assist the fire-fighting services by clearing their attics of inflammable material and stationing someone during an air raid in the top flat of their building to be ready for any emergency.”²

The other principal University figure involved in the promotion of eugenicist ideas during the 1920s and 1930s also had a pronounced military background. Francis Albert Crew (1886-1973) was a medical graduate of the University of Edinburgh and joined the Royal Army Medical Corps during WWI where he attained the rank of Major. After the war he returned to Edinburgh as an assistant in the Department of Zoology, became Director of the new Institute of Animal Breeding in 1920, then the first holder of the Buchanan Chair of Animal Genetics in 1929. In the early 1920s

¹ The Scots Independent February 1937 p 10

² The Scotsman 1 September 1939 p 16

Crew also took over from Professor Harvey Littlejohn as Commanding Officer of the Medical Unit of the Officers' Training Corps.

Like Colonel Lelean Professor Crew was both a senior member of the British Eugenics Society and ardent campaigner for its cause. As the historian Pauline Mazumdar pointed out, "Crew had joined the Eugenics Society in 1919, hoping to organise a branch society in Edinburgh University. The branch did not work out, but Crew himself lectured for the society throughout the twenties to various northern groups; 'mothers' meetings', Crew called them irritably."¹

At one such talk to the Scottish Council of Women Citizens' Association in October 1936 Professor Crew argued that, "The State, which had come to regard the child as a liability, would sooner or later be forced to exhibit a very lively interest both in the number and also the quality of the children that were to be born, fed housed, clothed, educated, and perhaps even employed."² Furthermore, "And the time was fast approaching when the State which was very busy improving the habitat, would decide who should be the parents of the inhabitants, and a pre-nuptial medical service would certainly come into being (Applause)."³

Crew then went on to praise the eugenicist measures imposed by the Nazi regime in Germany, pointing out favourably that, "In Germany, certificates of health before marriage were demanded of those persons applying for marriage loans and fairly comprehensive details of family history were required."⁴ Professor Crew concluded that such a scheme would inevitably be introduced into Britain as well because, "The

¹ Mazumdar, Eugenics, Genetics and Human Failings pp 151-152

² The Scotsman 5 October 1936 p 10

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

State was bound in its own interests sooner or later to place its sentinels at the portals of birth, for it was by this route that most of the undesirables entered this realm.”¹

During the 1920s and 1930s Professor Crew also gave frequent lectures on eugenics to Edinburgh University student societies,² and when he accepted the Buchanan Chair of Animal Genetics in 1929 made it clear that he intended to incorporate the subject into the university curriculum as soon as possible. At his inaugural lecture in 1930 he argued that, “The growing interest in the subject of eugenics on the part of the medical profession...makes it certain, I think, that an institution such as this...will soon be required to make its contribution to sociology and human medicine.”³ In 1938 a course under his supervision entitled ‘Genetics and Social Biology’ was indeed introduced into the Diploma in Public Health, and its specific topics, which included ‘Heredity in Man’, ‘The selective action of the human birth rate and human mortality’ and ‘The purposive improvement of mankind’⁴ closely followed the chapter headings in Professor Crew’s own book Organic Inheritance in Man.

This work claimed that, “The death-rate during the earlier age periods of life is selective, eliminating the biologically unworthy and leaving the biologically strong. Child welfare salvages the weakly who may grow up and reproduce: but they will breed true to their constitution.”⁵ Crew continued, “It must be recognised that every feeble-minded man is a potential drunkard, a potential criminal, that every feeble-minded woman is a potential prostitute and pauper, that they are all destined to

¹ The Scotsman 5 October 1936 p 10

² For example: “‘The Inequality of man’. Professor F. A. E. Crew has chosen the above subject for his annual series of six lectures. These lectures which will be held on Monday evenings at 5 p.m. in the physiology Class Room will commence on 18th October [1937]. The course is free to all matriculated students.” The Student 19 October 1937 p 8

³ University of Edinburgh Press Cuttings. Miscellaneous, Volume II 1930

⁴ The University of Edinburgh Calendar, 1938-39 p 391

⁵ Crew, F.A.E. Organic Inheritance in Man London: Oliver and Boyd, 1927 p 127

become the easy victims of their environment, because they are incapable of self-control, will-power, and of judgement, which alone enable mankind to control his environment.”¹ Furthermore, “Such as are feeble-minded by virtue of their organic inheritance are to be looked upon as bad stock, for they will ‘breed true’ to their character.”² The author concluded, “To rid a garden of weeds one plucks these out and steadfastly tills the soil in order that weeds may not grow. In the human garden it is necessary to pluck out the weeds in order to prevent their spread and steadfastly to develop the social environment in order that ultimately weeds will not appear.”³

The book also promoted the scientific-racial elements which were usually integral to eugenics. Professor Crew claimed that, “Race-preservation, not self-preservation, has been the first law of nature, the race is of paramount importance, its perpetuation and welfare being cared for by the strongest instincts...If the demand for individual freedom blinds men to their racial obligations, then the decadence and extinction of their line must inevitably follow.”⁴ During World War Two Crew again played an important role in the Royal Army Medical Corps, and he subsequently wrote the official history of the service’s wartime activities.⁵ In another post-war book Professor Crew argued that, “War can never be abolished from this earth, because war is in the very nature of man.”⁶

Turning to other members of the University staff who upheld relatively radical views during this period, Vere Gordon Childe (1892-1957) was born in Australia and obtained first class honours degrees in Latin, Greek and Philosophy at Sydney

¹ Crew, Organic Inheritance p 151

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. p 154

⁴ Ibid. p 17

⁵ Crew, F. A. E. The Army Medical Service London: HMSO, 1953

⁶ Crew, F. A. E., Must Man Wage War? The Biological Aspects London: C. A. Watts and Co. Ltd., 1952 p 15

University. He subsequently attended Oxford University to study for a D. Litt. in Classical Archaeology, and was attending that institution when World War One broke out. Childe refused to enlist either in Britain or Australia, but due to Left-wing rather than pacifistic ideals as his biographer Sally Green pointed out. “He had come round to anti-war views as a result of the persuasions of his Socialist friends, many of whom were members of the No-Conscription Fellowship and were imprisoned or on the run during the period 1916-18.”¹ Furthermore, “The viewpoint of the Socialists was that capitalists and the ruling class made wars and expected the working class to fight them. They were not necessarily pacifists, but believed that national wars were unimportant, as only class war was significant.”²

Vere Gordon Childe returned to his native country in summer 1917 and in spite of excellent academic qualifications his radical political beliefs made it difficult for him to obtain employment. Though eminently suitable for the post he was turned down as lecturer in Classics at the University of Queensland, and instead became Private Secretary to the leader of the Labour Party in New South Wales. In 1921 the Conservatives won the provincial elections and he was dismissed from his Labour post due to a lack of funding. Childe then emigrated to Britain and was employed as librarian at the Royal Anthropological Institute in London. During his time there he had two ground-breaking books establishing Archaeology as a serious academic discipline published, Dawn of European Civilisation (1925) and The Aryans: A Study of Indo-European Origins (1926). In 1927 Vere Gordon Childe was awarded the first Abercromby Professorship in Archaeology at Edinburgh University.

In the practical field Childe was best known for his dig at the Skara Brae Neolithic

¹ Green, Sally Prehistorian. A biography of V. Gordon Childe Bradford-on-Avon: Moonraker Press, 1981 p 23

² Ibid.

site in Orkney between 1927 and 1930. He made use of Marxist theorising and terminology to underpin his archaeological work throughout, such as the concept of the three social stages of 'savagery', 'barbarism', and 'civilization'. Though never a member of the Communist Party, Childe revelled in the nickname 'The Red Professor' among his colleagues and students at Edinburgh University. As Sally Green explained his political views even influenced his somewhat eccentric appearance. "He always wore a black wide-brimmed hat, reminiscent of Australian sheep farmers and commonly supposed to have been acquired in some outlandish East European country; though in fact it was purchased from a highly respectable Jermyn Street hatter."¹

Furthermore, "His shirt and tie was often as not red, to emphasize his Left-wing views, and clashed violently with his bright pink nose and rather carroty hair. In summer he frequently wore very short shorts, with socks, sock suspenders and great heavy boots. Extremely characteristic of the man was his shiny black mackintosh, carried over his arm or flung carelessly over his shoulders like a cape."² Green concluded, "Childe was undoubtedly aware of the sensation his appearance could cause, and on occasions enjoyed the discomfiture of the Establishment at his inappropriate dress."³

In the early 1930s Professor Childe was involved in correspondence with the leading British Communist Party figure Rajani Palme Dutt (1896-1974). A letter of 4 April 1931 reveals Childe's own strongly Marxist leanings, and indeed the central role that economic negativity and ultimately violent conflict played in the philosophy. Referring to his native Australia the Professor commented, "As for the

¹Green, *Prehistorian* pp75-76

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

workers, I can't imagine them getting constructively revolutionary. A real reduction in standard of living affecting all grades might have that effect. The present Federal policy however is to keep the big mass of the skilled and the railwaymen and suchlike reasonably comfortable. They would certainly be worse off for a while under a Soviet regime (unless run by a super Lenin) and probably guess this.”¹ Childe continued, “Australia is an ideal country for a Soviet system when the economic conditions are ripe, but as long as the Tories can rely on the active co-operation of (a) the small farmers (b) the blackcoated [*sic.*] proletariat & (c) a section of skilled unionists they would probably win if it came to fighting.”² He concluded, “The ‘Cockies’ are hefty chaps & capitalists generally have better organizing power and better leadership. At any rate one State is helpless, only the whole eight (or at least the three eastern States together) could carry through an effective revolution.”³

Professor Childe was also in frequent contact with the prominent group of scientists which included J.B.S. Haldane, J.D. Bernal and Lancelot Hogben and was campaigning at the time for greatly increased influence of science over national and social policy in Britain, again from a basically Marxist perspective. Sally Green pointed out that Childe became, “An early member of the informal dining club, known as the Tots and Quots, founded by Sally Zuckerman. In the years between the wars the members of the club included many up and coming scientists who later achieved fame: Joseph Needham, J.B.S. Haldane, J.G. Crowther, J.D.Bernal and Hyman Levy, the mathematician and one of the founders of the Association of

¹ CP/IND/DUTT/05/07 Vere Gordon Childe Correspondence with R Palme Dutt Letter from Royal Societies Club, St James Street, London SW1. 4 April 1931

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Scientific Workers.”¹ Furthermore, “The group of young men was serious in intent and particularly concerned with the question of the role of science in society.”²

Childe visited the Soviet Union several times during the 1930s, and in common with many British Left-wingers of the period eulogised the Communist state and downplayed its more regressive aspects. He explained his seemingly contradictory reticence to join the Communist Party of Great Britain in another letter to Palme Dutt, this time of October 1938. “I cannot see what really useful purpose would be effected by a prehistorian, resident in Edinburgh, joining the Faculty of Marx House. The only practical effect would be to tie round my neck a label, and I don’t like labels, especially if they are liable to be misleading.”³

Childe further underlined the largely tactical basis of this decision in arguing that, “I want to get good Marxist ideas across to my colleagues and students and in that I have had some success, but they would not listen if I began [original underline] as a Marxist - in Man Makes Himself the class-struggle is disclosed as a deduction from an imposing-looking array of facts. Were I competent I should like to get some ideas over to the masses, but here I feel one cuts more ice if one speaks as a prehistorian pure and simple.”⁴

Again like most Marxist sympathisers of the time Childe was particularly concerned about the rise of Nazism, and to some extent at least associated the ‘governing class’ of Britain with the German movement and fascism in general. Also in October 1938 he wrote to Palme Dutt that, “I shall still be in London next Monday, 10th, and at 5.30 shall give a lecture in Burlington House if it is still

¹ Green, Prehistorian p 74

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. Letter to R. Palme Dutt sent from Department of Prehistoric Archaeology, University of Edinburgh, 14 October 1938

⁴ CP/IND/DUTT/05/07 Letter to R Palme Dutt 14 October 1938

permitted to speak in public about pre-Aryan India., incidentally with a rich Jew in the chair.”¹ Furthermore, “If I know our blasted governing class rightly it will be some time before they imprison rich Jews and prohibit a handful of ineffectual intellectuals hearing words their saviour and Führer would not like and for the present they will be content with muzzling the Press, the pictures and inspiring the BBC. To praise the Nazi regime and vilify its critics.”²

Childe believed he would be on the Nazi blacklist for internment or execution if they succeed in conquering the United Kingdom, and in any case fully supported the war effort after September 1939. In his book Progress and Archaeology of 1944 he wrote that in general, “Warfare has...contributed to progress not only as a stimulant to invention, but also as an agent of diffusion, being the concomitant or condition of invasion and conquest.”³ Professor Childe retired from his Edinburgh post in 1956, returned to Australia, and died there the following year in what is thought likely to have been an act of suicide.

After the conclusion of World War One Dr Charles Sarolea was promoted to become the first Professor of French at Edinburgh University, and he also continued to be extremely politically and ideologically active. He was a staunch supporter of the League of Nations, and as Honorary President of the University League of Nations Union presided at many of the student Model Assemblies held throughout the 1920s and covered in a previous chapter. The new Professor of French also developed an increasingly anti-Semitic position over the inter-war period.

As indicated before these views were largely informed by an association between

¹ CP/IND/DUTT/05/07 Letter to R Palme Dutt sent from Hotel Vere, 17 & 18 Eglinton Crescent, Edinburgh 6 October 1938

² Ibid.

³ Green, Prehistorian p 99

Jews and Bolshevik rule in Russia, indeed international revolutionary communism in general. The Scotsman reported that at an address to the Jewish Literary Society in January 1920 Sarolea claimed that, “Persecution trained the proud rebel, but it also trained the abject slave. Both types were equally represented amongst the Jews....The Jew had been the greatest revolutionary force of the 19th century.”¹ Furthermore, “The fathers of Socialism, Marx and Lassalle were Jews...The majority of the Russian Bolsheviks were Jews, Trotsky, Litvinoff, Radek, and countless others.”² He concluded that, “Through the accident of their geographical dispersion the Jews have become more involved than any other race in the issues of the war. It was an ominous fact that they were at the tender mercies of the new nationalities which had been formed out of the wreckage of the past.”³

In his book published in 1922 Letter on Polish Affairs Professor Sarolea further argued that “A large alien population in any State, however strong, is always a serious problem...And let it be noted that it has not assimilated, by the deliberate policy of the Jews themselves...The Polish Jew is the most bigoted, the most fanatic of nationalists.”⁴ Furthermore, “New York is suffering from the Ghetto habits and the commercial idiosyncrasies of the Jews, as there are not more than one million Jews in the American metropolis. But in Poland this evil is not the exception, but the universal rule.”⁵

Sarolea also implied at least an element of Jewish subterfuge as lying behind the contemporary mainstream socialist movement in the United Kingdom. In an article published in The Scotsman in 1924, shortly after the inauguration of the first Labour

¹ The Scotsman 26 January 1920 p 8

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Sarolea, C, Letter on Polish Affairs Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1922 pp 93-95

⁵ Ibid. p 97

Government, the professor claimed that, “One has only to be familiar with the currents and undercurrents of the British Labour movement for the last six years to be convinced that there exists a far reaching and persistent subterranean Bolshevik conspiracy in this country, undermining our institutions, poisoning the minds of a large section of the British working class. To-day Russian Bolshevism and British Mass Socialism have become two wings of the same army.”¹ Furthermore, “May I mention one strange and significant fact which came under my own notice. Both in Moscow and in Petrograd I discovered two exalted Bolshevik officials in charge of the English Department at the Foreign Office. Both gentlemen spoke perfect English, and seemed wonderfully well informed about British politics and British personalities.”² He concluded, “The simple explanation proved to be that both gentlemen were English Jews who had only recently entered the service of the Soviet.”³

Professor Sarolea resigned from the Chair of French in 1931, at least in part to devote more time to his campaigning activities. In the mid-1930s he opposed the widespread calls to have League of Nations based sanctions imposed on Italy due to its invasion of Abyssinia, and in so doing entered into a public ideological conflict with one of his former University colleagues. As Samantha Johnson put it, “Sarolea’s most formidable opponent in this respect was a contemporary from the University of Edinburgh, Professor Arthur Berriedale Keith. The arguments in Sarolea’s Scotsman letter were swiftly taken up by Berriedale Keith. A respected academic and savant of international affairs, Berriedale Keith was wholeheartedly a supporter of the League

¹ The Scotsman 25 October 1924 p 8

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

and its policy of sanctions.”¹ Furthermore, “Italy, he believed, had waged a war of undisguised aggression on a country whose sovereignty and independence Britain [was] under a categorical obligation to maintain. That was certainly true: Britain did have an obligation as a member of the League to undertake the defence of Abyssinian sovereignty.”²

Like many others of this period emeritus Professor Sarolea was heavily affected by the outbreak of Civil War in Spain in 1936, and especially the direct intervention of the U.S.S.R.. He perceived an imminent communist threat to the whole of Europe and this, coupled with the increasing anti-Semitism already mentioned, led him into sympathy with the Nazi ideology and regime. According to Samantha Johnson, “National Socialism was in his view the ‘inevitable reaction [to the Versailles Peace Settlement] and an attempt to save the German people from chaos.’”³ Sarolea attended the 1936 and 1937 Nuremberg Rallies as a guest of the Nazi government, joined the Anglo-German Fellowship in 1937, and set up an Edinburgh branch of Sir Barry Domvile’s similarly pro-Nazi Link organisation the same year. Charles Sarolea’s political views were largely unaltered by World War Two, and he died in Edinburgh in 1953.

Dr Otto Schlapp became the first lecturer in German Language and Literature at Edinburgh University in 1894. A chair in the subject was inaugurated in 1919, but Schlapp was not admitted to the post until 1926 with the professorship being kept vacant in the interim. As the historian Sheila Wagg explained, “After World War I, attitudes towards German nationals were still far from cordial, and although approval was given for the establishment of a Chair of German in 1919, Dr Schlapp’s

¹ Johnson *A Good European and Sincere Racist* pp 280-281

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.* p 317

promotion...was delayed until 1926 because of University policy in the post-war years, which resolved that no person would be appointed Professor of German who was not of British nationality and parentage.”¹

The German lecturer was evidently popular with his students, as eighty-three honours graduates put their names to a Memorial submitted to the University Court and calling on it to reverse their decision. In any case Professor Schlapp only held the Chair of German for three years. He resigned in 1929, but thereafter continued to play a prominent role in university life including coming a close second in the 1932 Rectorial election.

After the Nazi seizure of power in Germany Dr. Schlapp expressed a strong support for the new regime, including concomitant elements of anti-Semitism. In November 1933 he presented a lecture entitled ‘The Nazis and the Jews’ at Trinity Church, Glasgow. During the course of this talk the emeritus professor stated that “Only one per cent of the population of Germany - about 600,000 - were Jews, yet...80 per cent of the highest posts under the Republic were had by Jews, which was an enormous preponderance and domination.”² Furthermore, “They were a race apart. Their mentality was different from that of the Germans. They inclined to materialism and had a different morality. Their critical faculty made them a disintegrating factor in the life of the German nation, and they were considered by many Germans as a danger to the nation.”³

As well as anti-Semitism there is evidence of at least some degree of the anti-Irish sentiment common in Scotland at this time among University staff. Dr Andrew

¹ Wagg, Sheila M. German at the University of Edinburgh 1894-1994 Shelia M Wagg: Edinburgh, 1999 p 82

² The Glasgow Herald Monday 24 April 1933 p 14

³ Ibid.

Dewar Gibb was a part-time lecturer in law at Edinburgh University during the early 1930s, and also the Scottish National Party candidate in the Scottish University parliamentary constituency by-election of 1936. He came second in this contest with a significant 29% of the vote, and was the chairman of the SNP between 1936 and 1940. In a work published in 1930 entitled Scotland in Eclipse Dewar Gibb claimed that, “But the priests who hold over their flock the standing threat of hell-fire, a penalty incurred alike by marrying Presbyterians, and by the use of contraceptives, see to it that their sheep do not, by marriage, stray out of the Roman Catholic fold which is the same thing, practically, as the Irish fold.”¹

Furthermore, “Thus in the heart of a dwindling though virile and intelligent race is growing up another people, immeasurably inferior in every way, but cohesive and solid, refusing obstinately, at the behest of obscurantist magic-men, to mingle with the people whose land they are usurping; unaware of, or if aware, disloyal to all the finest ideals and ambitions of the Scottish race: distinguished by a veritable will to squalor which is mainly responsible for Scottish slumdom; squatting and breeding in such numbers as to threaten in another hundred years to gain actual predominance in the country.”² At the end of the decade Professor Berriedale Keith similarly claimed that, “A dangerous influx of Irish nationals has deeply affected the racial complex of western Scotland, and maintenance of the closest relations with the English stock, which is akin to the Scots of the Lowlands, is necessary for the preservation of the vital element of the Scottish race.”³

¹ Gibb, Andrew Dewar Scotland in Eclipse London: Humphrey Toulmin 1930 p 56

² Ibid. pp 56-57

² Keith, A. Berriedale The Causes of the War London: Thomas Nelson, 1940 p 478

³ Finlay, Richard J., Independent and Free. Scottish Politics and the Origins of the Scottish National Party 1918-1945 Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd., 1994 pp 197-198

Looking again at more mainstream ideological positions, Sir Richard Lodge also continued to be politically active after the end of World War One. He was an energetic supporter of the League of Nations Union, though like Charles Sarolea viewed it more as a bastion against the spread of Communism than route towards the ultimate breakdown of national barriers. In his opening lecture of the European History class for the 1920-21 session Professor Lodge argued that, “It was imperative that the League of Nations should prove successful because otherwise the principle of nationality would be discredited, and this would vitally encourage those very strong disruptive influences, whether they called them Bolshevism or anything else, which, if they triumphed, would break up the peace of Europe by something worse than international war, class-war.”¹ Furthermore, “Upon Universities, and especially in Scotland upon their University lay the grave responsibility of making the most of the opportunities which were now offered to encourage international combination and unity (Applause).”²

Sir Richard Lodge retired from the Chair of History in 1925 and was replaced by Basil Frederick Williams (1867-1950). Williams had fought in the Boer War and served as an education officer with the Royal Field Artillery during World War One, and immediately prior to accepting the Edinburgh position was Kingsford Professor of History at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. In any case like his predecessor Professor Williams strongly supported the League of Nations, indeed was in charge of the overall Edinburgh branch of the League of Nations Union during the late 1920s. He also adopted a basically imperialistic approach to the League and Britain’s role in it. In his work The British Empire (1928) Professor Williams argued that,

¹ The Scotsman 15 October 1919 p 11

² Ibid.

“Our loyalty to the British Empire, so far from conflicting, as some appear to think, with an even more comprehensive loyalty to the League of Nations, actually fosters this wider sympathy. We are learning from our own commonwealth that, however violent our differences may be, they can and must be solved without recourse to the futility of war.”¹

In the same book Williams both implicitly condemned Roman Catholicism and again argued in favour of the British model of empire by stating, “To Drake and his fellows the crying enormity of the age was the unfair monopoly given by an ignorant priest to a power that seemed to them the incarnation of cruelty, superstition and oppression, a standing obstacle to a free life of adventure and national development by others.”² Furthermore, “It never occurred to them that piracy, almost the only method left for Englishmen who wished to sail in the newly discovered seas, was not perfectly legitimate warfare against such a foe; while their genuine conviction that they were engaged on a holy adventure...is evident from their sailing orders and from the lives and words of men like Frobisher and Gilbert.”³ Professor Williams concluded, “Thus Englishmen, depending far less than most foreign adventurers on Government support, acquired by constant risks and frequent failures that sense of personal responsibility essential for those who aim to play a great part in the government of the world.”⁴

Professor James Mackintosh remained as Dean of the Faculty of Law throughout the 1920s and 1930s, and as such continued to preside over University laureation ceremonies. As covered in a previous chapter the first post-war honorary LLD was

¹ Williams, Basil The British Empire London: Thornton Butterworth Limited, 1928 pp 241-242

² Ibid., p 36

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., p 37

presented to Field-Marshal Douglas Haig, British Commander-in-Chief, and his martial exploits were fully highlighted and eulogised at the ceremony. Indeed any military dimensions to the careers of honorary graduands were emphasised right up to the outbreak of World War Two. For example in July 1938 the late Vice-Chancellor of the University of Queensland was granted a posthumous honorary degree, and in awarding it Professor Mackintosh claimed that, “During the war his services with the Australian Army Medical Corps were of outstanding value, while his intense sympathy with those who had suffered by the war was shown by his devoted labours in the field of rehabilitation, which were deservedly recognised by the award of the Companionship of the British Empire.”¹ He concluded, “Patriotism – love for his native land, for the country of his adoption and for the Empire as a whole – was for him no mere sentiment but a deep and abiding spring of action.”²

At the same ceremony the Governor-General of Australia, Baron Gowrie of Canberra and Dirleton, also received an LLD, and the Dean of the Law Faculty pointed out that, “Sprung from a line of soldiers, Lord Gowrie has nobly upheld the family tradition as a renowned son of Mars from his youth up, for he was only 27 when he won the Victoria Cross for conspicuous gallantry in saving the life of a comrade at the Battle of Gadaref in the Sudan.”³ Furthermore, “In the Great War he gained fresh laurels by distinguished service with the forces in France and at

¹ Edinburgh University Laureation Addresses LLD The Late William Nathaniel Robertson, C.M.G., C.B.E., M.B., C.M., late Vice-Chancellor of the University of Queensland, Australia 20 July 1938

² Ibid.

³ Edinburgh University Laureation Addresses LLD The Right Hon. Baron Gowrie of Canberra and Dirleton, V.C., G.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O., Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia 20 July 1938

Gallipoli, where he was severely wounded...Alike as gallant soldier and sagacious administrator, Lord Gowrie is eminently deserving of our academic wealth.”¹

The next two academics to be looked at did not become members of the staff at Edinburgh University until the mid-1930s, but still had an important impact and relevance to the topic at hand. John Baillie (1886-1960) was born in Gairloch and educated at Edinburgh itself where he received degrees in philosophy and divinity. Like many other theological students of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries he also spent a period studying in Germany, and at least partially because of this decided not to take part in the actual fighting during World War One. As his biographer George Newlands explained, “Neither John nor Donald [his brother] volunteered for the trenches. Warm memories of German friends meant that not all Scots ministers were ready to embrace the unthinking anti-German sentiment which engulfed the churches in 1914.”² John Baillie did take part in war-related Y.M.C.A. work in France, and in any case in common with so many others the period played a major role in his life and viewpoints. As Newlands again pointed out, “Many – indeed most – of John’s and Donald’s closest student friends died at an early age in the First World War. These were shattering experiences. They remained, in that sense, brands plucked from the burning, and life for them was not to be taken for granted, but to be lived with a high sense of purpose.”³

After the conclusion of hostilities John Baillie moved to North America where he worked as professor of theology in first the Auburn Theological Seminary, New York, then Emmanuel College, Toronto, and finally the Union Seminary, again in New York. During this period Baillie developed a relatively liberal theological and

¹ *Ibid.*

² Newlands, George *John and Donald Baillie: Transatlantic Theology* Peter Lang AG: Bern 2002 p 53

³ *Ibid.* p 19

religious outlook, and he returned to Edinburgh in 1934 as Professor of Divinity. Rev. Professor Baillie also became heavily involved in Church of Scotland General Assembly deliberations, including those relating to the then widely debated issues of war and peace. By the middle of the 1930s the Church had moved away from the extreme patriotism and outright militarism which characterised its positions during World War One. The new more moderate approach attempted to allow for the coexistence of outright pacifism with elements of the Just War theory, but both aimed at the ultimate abolition of warfare.

In May 1937 Professor Baillie was co-opted onto a General Assembly Church and Nation committee which produced a report entitled 'The Church's Attitude to Peace and War'. This document stated, "The Abolition of War. A Supreme Christian Duty. It is well to put on record and keep in mind the long distance which all Christians, pacifist and non-pacifist, can travel together. All are agreed on the hatefulness of war and on its inadequacy as a means of securing justice and the enduring solution of any conflict of international interests."¹ Furthermore, "War raises more problems...than those it seeks to settle; and the experience of the world in the last war has taught us that for its successful prosecution it relies on mass suggestion and on campaigns of lies and deceit. It rouses such antagonisms as make it hardly possible to view the enemy as a brother man for whom Christ died."²

The paper promoted the League of Nations as a practical route towards the avoidance of future conflict, and also argued that Jesus himself did not oppose the use of violence in all circumstances. "The millennium cannot be hastened by acting as if it had arrived. Christ applauded the man who did not resist injury done to

¹ Bai 1/11/1 Reports. Church of Scotland Report of the Committee on Church and Nation to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland May 1937 p 519

² Ibid.

himself; but we find no commendation in Christ of those who acquiesced when injury was done to others.”¹ The pacifist members of the committee outlined their own position as, “The overcoming of evil with good. We are pacifists because the total impression which Jesus Christ makes on us leaves us with no other choice.”² The report concluded that, “Fortunately, after we have recognised the different points of view of pacifist and non-pacifist, and with regret have found that our ways diverge, pacifist and non-pacifist can unite in working for the preservation of peace, or, if it is broken, for the restoration of peace, and may give themselves as a united body to some at least of the activities by which men of goodwill are seeking to avoid war.”³

Like many others John Baillie became increasingly concerned about the rise of totalitarianism during the 1930s. At his opening address to the Church of Scotland Youth Congress in January 1938 he pointed out that, “We had been accustomed to see the spire of tower of a Christian Church as the dominating feature of every village in Europe, and we had taken this to be symbolic of the whole ordering of life.”⁴ The Professor continued, “But now, in country after country, this is the very thing that is being challenged. In Russia those churches have been closed or turned into museums. In Spain they have been desecrated. In Germany pagan temples are beginning to be set up in their place.”⁵ Baillie concluded with both a warning and call for action from his audience. “And what of this country? I am sure we shall have to admit that here too the same forces are at work, even if they express themselves in

¹ Bai 1/11/1 Reports. Church of Scotland Report of the Committee on Church and Nation to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland May 1937 p 527

² Ibid. p 541

³ Ibid. p 554

⁴ Bai 1/4/3 Box 1 Opening Address: Church of Scotland Youth Congress Friday, 21 Jan 1938

⁵ Ibid.

less violent forms.”¹ Furthermore, “It is remarkable to what an extent the anti-Christian communism of Russia and the pagan totalitarianism of Germany are young men’s movements. In all these movements youth sets youth on fire. And the youth of Scotland are little likely to be set on fire for Christ unless you will do your part....That is your tremendous responsibility, and that is your glorious task.”²

After the outbreak of war in September 1939 Professor Baillie offered up a full general and theological support for Britain’s military endeavours, claiming that “We believe, then, that we must do no other than fight as bravely as we can to defend the world against the Nazi menace, and we believe that God is with us as we fight.”³ On the other hand there was none of the extreme jingoism and militarism which had characterised Church-related statements during the First World War. Baillie also pointed out that, “It is true there are a few among us who hold it to be God’s will that they should offer no forceful resistance to armed attack, however wanton and brutal. Their number is not great and they bear their witness quietly.”⁴ Furthermore, “We believe them to be in error, but it is the error of the saints rather than of the sinners, and of idealists rather than cynics; and just because it is the opposite kind of error from that which now chiefly menaces the world, we feel that they may have been sent unto us as a sign.”⁵

As well as an interest in international affairs John Baillie expressed a strong concern about poverty throughout his career, for example in one of his early sermons from the 1920s he claimed that, “The World’s need becomes our need. In all its afflictions we too are afflicted. We suffer with the children whose miseries are the

¹ Bai 1/4/3 Box 1 Opening Address: Church of Scotland Youth Congress Friday, 21 Jan 1938

² Ibid.

³ Bai 1/4/3 Box 3 The Theology of War p 2

⁴ Ibid. p 1

⁵ Bai 1/4/3 Box 3 The Theology of War p 1

squalid streets of the slums...Our Greek temple lies in ruins at our feet.”¹ At an address to the Jubilee Gathering of the Scottish Women’s Guild in May 1937 he pointed out that, “And yet one cannot speak of the Christian homes of Scotland without thinking also, wistfully, and with something of shame, of other homes that are no homes at all – the slums of our cities where children are born to hunger and squalor and a tainted life.”²

In 1943 Professor Baillie became both Moderator of the Church of Scotland and convenor of the Committee for the Interpretation of God’s Will in the Present Crisis. The report of this body, ‘God’s Will for Church and Nation’, was published in 1946 and argued that, “Economic power must be made objectively responsible for the community as a whole...It is a further question to what extent, and in what cases, this will involve the direct ownership by the community, through the State, of the means of production and distribution.”³ The deliberations of the committee and its resultant report played a significant part in the overall pressures which led on to the welfare state measures introduced by the post-war Labour Government.

The last professor to be looked at in this chapter was also in many ways the one most affected by the inter-war ideological and political turmoil. Max Born (1882-1970) was born in Breslau, Germany studied at Breslau, Heidelberg and Zurich Universities, and in 1914 became Professor of Theoretical Physics at the University of Berlin. According to his biographer Richard Staley, in 1912 he achieved, “The second major theoretical breakthrough [in physics] of the early twentieth century,

¹ Bai 1/5/51-60 Sermons

² Bai 1/4/3 Box 3 Address for the Jubilee Mass Gathering of the Church of Scotland Women’s Guild 8 May 1937

³ God’s Will for Church and Nation S.C.M. Press Limited, London 1946 p 62

following Einstein's lead to apply quantum theory to the specific heat of solids."¹ Born then worked at the Universities of Frankfurt and Göttingen, and his investigations at this time into quantum mechanics eventually earned him the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1954

Dr Born was also of Jewish extraction, and he later described the impact that the rise of Nazism in Germany during the 1920s had on his health and general well-being. "The poor condition of my nerves...was due not only to overwork but also to other worries, mainly political ones. At the beginning of the year 1929, I think, I was sent to a sanatorium at Constance on Lake Constance; there I was kept in bed at first, but was later allowed to sit in the lounge and talk to people."² Furthermore, "But the conversation of all the patients, who were manufacturers, doctors, lawyers, or at any rate all people from the upper middle classes, was almost wholly about Hitler and the high hopes they had of him, interspersed with virulent attacks on the Jews. This drove me back to my room again."³

Born went on to outline the seizure of state control by the National Socialists, and his consequent decision to quit the country. "Several elections for the Reichstag were held, which increased the number of Nazi delegates, and Hitler's power grew accordingly. His brown hordes terrorised the country. Then came Hitler's seizure of power."⁴ He continued, "And one day at the end of April, 1933, I found my name in the paper amongst the list of those who were considered unsuitable to be civil

¹ Matthew H. C. G. and Harrison, Brian (eds) Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. From the Earliest Times to the Year 2000 Volume 6 Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004 p 664

² Born, Max The Born-Einstein Letters. Correspondence between Albert Einstein and Max and Hedwig Born from 1916-1955 London: Macmillan, 1971 p112

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid. p 113

servants, according to the new 'Laws'...After I had been given 'leave of absence', we decided to leave Germany at once.”¹

Professor Born found refuge in Britain, where he worked first as a lecturer in Cambridge, then in 1936 was given the Tait Professorship in Physics at Edinburgh University. Born also had a long-standing friendship with his fellow physicist Albert Einstein, and in September 1938 he wrote to him from Edinburgh, “I would very much like to send you another peaceful letter about my physical and geometrical phantasies [*sic.*], but things political occupy my mind to such an extent that I feel compelled to write about them first of all. We hear such horrible things from Germany, and particularly from Vienna, where people are literally starving.”² He continued, “Until recently I still had property and income in Germany, and we were able to use this to help not only a few of our relatives but others as well. A short time ago, however, I learnt that my property in Germany had been confiscated by the secret police. Thus, even this chance of helping people has come to an end. This depresses me more than the general political situation and the threat of war.”³

In another letter of the following year Born outlined both the desperate plight of members of his family and other Jews remaining in Germany, and the role that his wife and Quakers in Scotland in general were playing in assisting victims of Nazi oppression. “Hedi, at least, is doing something for the refugees. Her domestic servant office flourishes; she has already succeeded in saving many people from the Nazis, unfortunately virtually only women.” He further pointed out that, “The work of the Quakers in saving Jews and other victims of persecution, in which my wife had a

¹ Born, Max The Born-Einstein Letters. Correspondence between Albert Einstein and Max and Hedwig Born from 1916-1955 London: Macmillan, 1971 p113

² Born, The Born Einstein Letters p135

³ Ibid.

great interest, deserves the greatest praise.”¹ However the communication also contained the more worrying revelations that, “My sister and other relatives have also escaped – except for a few unfortunate cousins. What can one do with a 55-year-old dentist? Unless he emigrates soon, the Gestapo will put him into a concentration camp. But his American registration number is 60,000!”²

Professor Born was opposed to all forms of totalitarianism, and consequently surprised at Albert Einstein’s uncritical stance toward the USSR. Looking back at the show trials of the late 1930s he wrote, “The Russian trials were Stalin’s purges, with which he attempted to consolidate his power. Like most people in the West, I believed these show trials to be the arbitrary acts of a cruel dictator.”³ However, he continued, “Einstein was apparently of a different opinion; he believed that when threatened by Hitler the Russians had no choice but to destroy as many of their enemies within their own camp as possible. I find it hard to reconcile this point of view with Einstein’s gentle, humanitarian disposition.”⁴

Perhaps not surprisingly Max Born supported the Allied military effort against Nazi Germany during World War Two. On the other hand he recognised the role that the misuse of science, and in particular social-Darwinism, had played in the perpetuation of inter-human conflict and violence during the twentieth century. In another letter sent from his Edinburgh home to Einstein in 1944 Born argued that, “I think we must have an international organisation and, even more important, an international code of behaviour or ethics (like the very strict rules which the British physicians have inside their profession) by which our scientific community could act

¹ Born, The Born Einstein Letters p 141

² Ibid. p 138

³ Ibid. p 130

⁴ Ibid. p 131

as a regulating and stabilising power in the world, not, as at present, being no more than tools of industries and governments.” He further pointed out that, “But some branches of biological science, logically backward and based on poor evidence, have been tools in the hand of criminal politicians for throwing us back in the state of the jungle. There must be a way of preventing a repetition of such things.”¹

The final Edinburgh University academic to be looked at in this chapter, Arthur Birnie (1890-1962), was born in Edinburgh and gained first class honours degrees in History and Economics at the city’s University. Birnie was a member of the Royal Army Medical Corps during World War One, then became a lecturer in Economic History at first Aberdeen University in 1919 then Edinburgh itself in 1925. He also left behind a diary which covers the mid-1930s in some detail, and as such provides a good personal insight into the various local ideological and political currents of the time.

In April 1935, for example, Birnie noted the dramatic and sometimes violent effects of the swift growth in support for the extreme anti-Catholic Protestant Action group in Edinburgh. “Went up town for a walk. Landed into a huge crowd in the High St. It consisted of Protestants demonstrating against the reception being given by the Town Council to the Conference of Catholic Young Men’s Societies.”² Furthermore, “We have two Protestant Councillors, now, Cormack and Marr, and Cormack is something of a firebrand. He had organised this demonstration. His supporters wore rosettes and indulged in shouts of ‘No Popery’, also I regret to say in very filthy language, especially the women.”³

¹ Born, The Born Einstein Letters p 145

² Diaries of Arthur Birnie 1934-1936 ACC11018/7 27 April 1935

³ Ibid.

Birnie continued, “The police were out in force and mounted men kept the High St. clear. Nothing much happened, but when cars passed through the crowds with guests, they were booed. One taxi which contained what looked like a bishop, provoked a storm of indignation and some stone-throwing.”¹ Finally, “It wasn’t pleasant to hear the deep voice of the mob. In one of the swirls of the crowd an elderly woman was knocked down, but she got to her feet before any harm was done.”²

By way of contrast later in the same year the diarist noted the popular and colourful celebrations in Edinburgh of the King’s Silver Jubilee. “Got off [a tramcar] in the middle of North Bridge, as we had come to a standstill. The Register House and the Nelson Monument floodlit. We walked along Princes St. Immense crowds and traffic crawling. Turned off at Waverley Bridge and climbed steps to St Giles. Crown floodlit.”³ Furthermore, “Night fine but misty in the distance and so impossible to see the bonfires in Fife and elsewhere. Came round by the University. Dome floodlit and bright light had been placed at the end of the torch which a figure on the dome holds aloft. It had rather a striking effect. Managed to catch a car at Surgeons Hall and got home at 12.15 a.m.”⁴

A few months later Birnie took one of his daughters to an open-day held at an army barracks in the city. This diary entry reveals both some of the theatrical promotional activities of the army during this period as well as continuing enthusiasm for all things military among the public, in spite of the contemporary popularity of pacifism. “After lunch, took Monica again to Redford Barracks. This

¹ Diaries of Arthur Birnie 1934-1936 ACC11018/7 27 April 1935

² Ibid. 6 May 1935

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

was to be a special day and there were thousands there. We took a train to Craiglockhart but all the cars that passed the station were crowded. We started to walk but when about half-way, managed to squeeze on to a tram which was letting off a passenger. Barracks swarming with people.”¹ Furthermore, “Shortly before four, the musical ride took place. Very interesting this time as the troops were dressed in pre-war uniforms, with red tunics, black busbies etc. The drummer of the band was a splendid, barbaric figure with a white busby and a red buckle. We stood round a field and Monica pushed her way to the front. A little nervous at times of the horses’ hoofs. Left shortly after four and got a car.”²

In October 1935 Italy launched an attack on the African state of Abyssinia, and this represented one of the major international incidents of the decade which would eventually build up to the outbreak of another world war. Arthur Birnie reacted to the development by expressing support for League of Nations sanctions, and if necessary the use of military force. “News over wireless tonight that Italy has commenced hostilities against Abyssinia. Adowa and other towns bombed. Yvonne [Birnie’s French wife] quite depressed at prospect of European War.”³ Birnie continued, “Feel inclined to support ‘sanctions’ myself by the League of Nations. Complete pacifism all right, but in that case we have to abolish the police force. Only chance of peace (it may not be a good one) is to apply pressure from the League against Italy and pressure backed up by force.”⁴ He concluded, “Read an interesting letter yesterday which appeared in a French radical paper by Jules Romains, the

¹ Ibid. 15 August 1935

² Diaries of Arthur Birnie 15 August 1935

³ Ibid. 3 October 1935

⁴ Ibid.

author of Men of Good Will in support of ‘sanctions’. All the radical and socialist parties in Europe seem to take this view.”

The following year Arthur Birnie described the scene at the Mound one Sunday afternoon. This city-centre public space was the focal-point for political campaigning and agitation in Edinburgh during the inter-war period, and Birnie’s sketch gives an indication of the variety and extent of ideological divisions present at the time, ones which had been hugely exacerbated by the outbreak of civil war in Spain a few months previously. “I went down to the Mound to listen to open-air speakers....There were Protestants and evangelists, socialists and Communists. Latter loud in abuse of Fascists who had a meeting at the Mound last Sunday, accompanied by a small riot. ‘If you see a mad dog, you don’t stroke it, you shoot it.’ Ditto Fascists.”¹

In fact Birnie had visited the meeting place specifically to hear any Fascist speakers present. He had become increasingly disillusioned with democratic politics, for example in November 1935 the university lecturer reacted to the General Election result with, “Feel disgusted with politics. No idealism anywhere, even among the Socialists. Liberals not to be trusted. They ‘rat’ at the slightest provocation.”² Furthermore, “Suppose it is either National Government or a dictatorship and former is preferable. Great harm done by unprincipled political leaders. Lloyd George killed the Liberal Party. Ramsay Macdonald crippled the Labour Party. May be the end of genuine party government. Suspect also that the grant of the franchise to women has not helped progressive or liberal politics.”³ In another diary entry of January 1935 he pointed out that, “Voting papers for the University by-election arrived: candidates,

¹ Diaries of Arthur Birnie 1934-1937 18 October 1936

² Ibid. 15 November 1935

³ Ibid.

Gibb (Scots. Nationalist), Ramsay Macdonald (National Gov.), Cleghorn Thomson (Lab.). Shall not vote for any of them. Sickening how the Tories vote for Ramsay Mac. Like sheep at the bidding of Baldwin.”¹

Indeed the week following his visit to the Mound in October 1936 Birnie expressed a direct sympathy for the Fascist cause. His explanation for this transformation also reveals the close ideological connections between the two extremes of Right and Left, indeed in an earlier diary entry Arthur Birnie had revealed that he was for a short time the Secretary of the Economic branch of the Scottish USSR Society. “Announced that I intended to become a Fascist. Have serious thoughts about it. Other parties, espc. Lib., Lab., and Communists are so hopeless, will never achieve anything.”² Furthermore, “A Fascist state will be no worse than the hypocrisy we have just now, and may promote a little more equality. Begin to feel that democracy as we have it is a show. Means simply government of the wealthy. Communism is an ideal system, but times are not ripe for it here, and the Communists are detestable.”³

In the last outdoor meeting covered in his diaries Birnie was again unable to hear the British Union of Fascist speakers, though this time due to the overwhelming noise from the crowd. The diary entry again reveals both the extent of popular interest in politics in Edinburgh in the mid-1930s, and the deep and often bitter divisions. “After tea, went to the Mound, also with Yvonne II [his other daughter] to hear the Fascists. Crowd of several thousands. One speaker from the top of a van, but impossible to hear him, the crowd was making a hideous din, or rather about 100 Communists in the crowd making a din. The speaker however went to the end of his

¹ Ibid. 22 January 1936

² Diaries of Arthur Birnie 1934-1937 25 October 1936

³ Ibid.

speech.”¹

Turning now to some institutional developments during the inter-war period, the first thing to note is that Edinburgh University’s major contribution to the military effort in World War One was fully recognised by the state authorities both through grateful comments, and in the more concrete form of greatly increased funding. In November 1920 the following letter from the Chancellor of the Exchequer Austen Chamberlain to the newly formed University Grants Committee was laid before the Edinburgh University Senatus: “As you are aware, His Majesty’s Government fully appreciates the vital importance of the Universities in the national life, and Parliament has recognised that importance by sanctioning recurrent grants-in-aid amounting to one million pounds, a figure rather more than double the grants paid before the war.”²

The impact of these changes in the state grant paid to Edinburgh University can be seen in the growth of nearly fifty per-cent between sessions 1918-19 and 1919-20, and by 1937-38 the payment had increased nearly five-fold from its pre-war levels (see [Table 4](#) below). This in turn allowed for a large expansion in student numbers in the post-war period, though as can be seen the numbers declined again somewhat during the mid to late 1930s.

Table 4: Edinburgh University Income and Membership 1912-1938³

¹ Ibid. 2 May 1937

² University of Edinburgh Senatus Academicus. Printed Minutes Volume III Oct. 1920 to July 1924 pp 22-23

³ Figures taken from: Dawson, W.H., The Yearbook of the Universities of the British Empire 1912-1923 London: G.Bell and Sons, 1924 and University Grants Committee. Returns from Universities and University Colleges In Receipt of Treasury Grant. 1922-32 / 1932-38 London: HMSO, 1932 / 1938. The annual change in overall income is somewhat distorted by the impact of major quinquennial distributions from the Carnegie Trust, hence the discrepancy between e.g. 1912-13 and 1913-14

Year	Full-time Students	Income (£)	Parliamentary / Treasury Grant (£) ¹	Government Grant as Percentage of Income
1912-13	3352	104,548	24,262	23.2
1913-14	3282	70,475	29,295	41.6
1915-16	1811	109,182	27,768	25.4
1918-19	3554	63,224	27,268	43.1
1919-20	4643	117,830	40,260	34.1
1922-23	4370	231,447	70,000	30.2
1929-30	4440	265,644	98,914	37.2
1930-31	4437	283,879	110,943	39.1
1931-32	4327	285,707	112,064	39.1
1932-33	4243	284,975	111,646	39.2
1933-34	4251	284,709	110,833	38.9
1935-36	3895	286,575	99,777	34.8
1936-37	3843	297,752	111,469	37.4
1937-38	3762	303,186	111,658	36.8

Plans had already been in place before World War One for a major new science and engineering campus, and on 6 July 1920 King George V laid the foundation stone for the first building at a one hundred and fifteen acre site in Liberton. By 1939 the original Chemistry Department had been joined by buildings for Zoology, Geology, Animal Genetics, and Engineering, and the whole project was greatly facilitated by the large post-war increases in government funding.

The University Grants Committee specifically encouraged the expansion of science and technology facilities, at least in part because of the major impact university research was deemed to have had on the war effort as this extract from the Yearbook of the Universities of the British Empire indicates: “Brains, rather than arms, have been the determining factor in the Great War. Every kind of special knowledge and every type of trained intelligence have been mobilized in countering

¹ These two separate governmental grants were consolidated after the creation of the University Grants Committee in 1919

the enemy's devices, inventing means of extending the offensive and in strengthening our position both at home and abroad.”¹

In general increased funding and the creation of the UGC led to deepening ties between British universities and the state during the inter-war period. This reciprocal loyalty between state and academic institution was further demonstrated during the General Strike of 1926, during which the University lent its full approval and encouragement to those students taking part in the government-organised strike resistance measures.

The Court Minutes reveal that, “Referring to the condition of emergency created by the recent General Strike, the Principal read a letter from the District Civil Commissioner, expressing on behalf of the Government his thanks and his appreciation of the response which the students had made to the Government's request for volunteer assistance in carrying on the essential services of the country.” Furthermore, “The Principal and Deans' Committee, after consultation with representative students, and with the approval of the Senatus, had made such arrangements as would ensure in so far as possible that students taking part in such work would not be placed at a disadvantage as regards their University careers.”²

Turning finally to directly militaristic developments, almost immediately after the conclusion of World War One the War Office contacted Edinburgh University to encourage continued support and promotion of the Officers' Training Corps. “Sir, I am commanded by the Army Council to inform you that they have been reviewing the position of the Senior Division of the Officers' Training Corps. They wish to impress on all members of the University the important role played by the Officers'

¹ Dawson, W.H., The Yearbook of the Universities of the British Empire 1918-1920 London: G.Bell and Sons, 1920 p 419

² Edinburgh University Court Signed Minutes Volume XIII 20th October 1920-16th July 1924 p340

Training Corps at the University of Edinburgh, especially during the opening stages of the War.”¹ Furthermore, “The situation now in the Senior Division is a peculiar one, and the Council feel, with the inevitable re-action after the cessation of hostilities, that the Officers’ Training Corps movement may languish. They do not, therefore, wish at this moment to bring pressure to bear on members of the University who are possibly war-weary, but they consider that the remainder of the present academic year should not be allowed to pass without steps being taken to prepare for the future.”² The message continued, “With this end in view they ask that preparation be made to select officers and leaders who will come forward in October next to raise interest and enlist sympathy among members of the University. In fact, the foundations should now be laid, on which it will be possible to restore the Contingent to at least its pre-war numbers and efficiency.”³ The War Office official also concluded by pointing out that the capitation grant, or payment per head to the University for every student enrolled in the Corps, was to be continued for that year at least.

In May 1920 the Chairman of the Military Education Committee, Professor Hudson Beare, acknowledged the post-war problems in recruiting for the Officers’ Training Corps by stating that “Men who had been members of the Junior Division Contingents [i.e. those based at Public Schools] who were now beginning to come again in large numbers to the Universities were not joining the Senior Division of the O.T.C.s as they used to.”⁴ In the following year another meeting of the same Senatus

¹ University of Edinburgh Senatus Academicus. Printed Minutes Volume II Oct. 1917 to July 1920 p 248

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ The University of Edinburgh Senatus Military Education Committee Minutes 19 October 1909 – 30 January 1945 p 20

body stated that “This Committee is of the opinion that the Officers’ Training Corps is of immense value in the formation of character and citizenship, and it is very desirable that the Senatus and Court of the University should identify themselves, *qua* University, with the Officers’ Training Corps Contingent in order to convince all students that service in the O.T.C. is a tradition of the University Life”¹. The Committee further specifically called for the inauguration of an annual ‘convesazione’ or informal function hosted by the University at which Freshers would be encouraged to join the O.T.C.

Presumably largely as a consequence of these deliberations an article entitled “The Value of the O.T.C. Sir Alfred Ewing’s Appeal to Students” appeared in the Edinburgh Evening Dispatch at the opening of the following Session, and explained that “A reception was given yesterday in the Upper Library of the Old College of Edinburgh University to new students, so that they might meet the officers and cadets of the University Contingent of the Officers’ Training Corps.”² Furthermore Sir Alfred Ewing, who hosted the event, “Said the occasion of the gathering was to give freshmen at the University an opportunity of meeting members of the O.T.C., so that they might learn something about the working of the Corps and be in a better position to decide whether they should join.”³

The Principal acknowledged that there had been an understandable decline in membership of the unit after the conclusion of war, but sought to counter this with “There was no doubt that the existence of an O.T.C. in any University was one of the many modern improvements which had made University life far more interesting and far more valuable than it used to be. So that, apart from any patriotic motives, the

¹ Ibid. p 96

² Officers Training Corps Archive acc.91 /017

³ Ibid.

student would be well advised if he took care to secure for himself the advantage of membership.”¹

In spite of such promotional events membership of the OTC at Edinburgh continued to stagnate during the early part of the 1920s, and the War Office again wrote to the Senatus in May 1923. “Sir, I am directed to enquire how many candidates your University has now registered as candidates for commissions in the Regular Army, and how many of those will be coming forward for commissions in the year 1924. In this connection, I am to point out that in the years immediately preceding the war the average yearly number of university candidates resenting themselves for regular commissions was 70, whereas the number gazetted last year (1922) was only 17.”² The piece continued, “I am to inform you that it is particularly desired to increase the flow of university candidates for commissions in the Regular Army, especially in the infantry, and I am further to say that any efforts which you can make to bring about this increase will be much appreciated. I am to add that as far as can be foreseen there is not likely to be any further reduction in the establishment of British officers, and that at the present moment the establishment of infantry subalterns is about 100 under strength.”³

In response The Senatus, “directed that the letter should be communicated to all the Faculties, and that the Faculties should be urged to bring the matter to the notice of students.”⁴ Following these official appeals The Student magazine ran a whole series of editorials, multi-page illustrated articles, and entire issues promoting the Officers’ Training Corps throughout the rest of the 1920s and 1930s right up to the

¹ Ibid.

² University of Edinburgh Senatus Academicus. Printed Minutes Volume III Oct. 1920 to July 1924 p 498

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

outbreak of World War two. Furthermore Professor Hudson Beare argued that membership of the Officers' Training Corps membership should be recognised in the entrance procedures for the Indian and domestic Civil Services, and as a result of his suggestion the Faculty of Arts "resolved that the principle of giving some compensation to members of the O.T.C. should be approved."¹

In any case between 1928 and 1939 membership of the Officers' Training Corps increased from 352 to 550, or from approximately 9% to 19% of eligible students and well above its establishment levels. As mentioned above 'Anti-Gas' classes had been introduced into the medical curriculum as early as 1936, and two years later the University authorities reacted to the Munich crisis by making concerted and urgent preparations for another major war.

As The Student explained, "During the third week of September [1938] when war-clouds suddenly blew up, the Principal hurried back from Brittany to meet the other Vice-Chancellors gathered in London for the purpose of discussing various measures that might require co-operation between the Universities in the event of war."² Furthermore, "The Court approved of the formation of a Central A.R.P. Committee composed of Professor Oliver as Convenor, with Bailie Falconer, Sir Thomas Hudson Beare, Dr J.B. Clark, Mr A. Miles, Professors A.J. Clark, Daly, Gray, Kendall, Lelean, Ogilvie, and Orr, Col. Campbell, Miss Sargeant, the Senior President of the S.R.C., the president of the Union, and the President of the Women's Union."³ The item concluded, "When Professor Oliver's organisation has laid down its stores, completed its units, and drawn up its plans for action, it will have to try to foresee changes in the future, and prepare accordingly to retain its mobility for quick

¹ Ibid. pp 508-509

² The Student, 1 November 1938 p 42

³ Ibid.

action on the outbreak of war. It will not be a small task and will need the loyal co-operation of all members of the University. **Safety first** [original bold]”¹

In terms of advanced preparations, therefore, Edinburgh University was far more ready for the outbreak of war in September 1939 than it had been in August 1914. On the other hand the attitude adopted towards the renewed fighting was restrained and determined rather than jingoistic, as the following statement from Principal Holland indicates.

We, successors of the students of 1914, did not reach the golden country. And many of us will not see the kingdom of our heirs. But this we have found within the last few weeks: spiritually we have come of age; we have come into our inheritance. It is ours for us to do with what we will. We make one forecast only. It is this: the rehabilitation of honour and justice and truth will be the work of those of us who, during the time to come, can retain our sense of values, and can endure to the end without giving way to bitterness or hate.²

¹ Ibid.

² The Student 1 October 1939 p 30

Chapter Five. The 1930s: The Student Body

A German boy in my gun team, Jan Kurtski, went down with a couple of machine-gun bullets through the leg. By this time we were the rearguard of the retreating battalion; the German tanks could be seen on the edge of the village. John Cornford and I stopped with the wounded man while the rest of the section went on. Three yards away was a wounded Spaniard, calling '*Compagno, compagno*', but he died before his comrades could do anything for him. Meanwhile, I was cutting the clothes away from Jan's wound with a blunt penknife. As I pulled the cloth away the blood flowed out hot over my hands, and congealed in a dark pool in the cold air.¹

As pointed out before the late 1920s and early 1930s marked the high-point of the post-World War One pacifistic reaction in Britain. By September 1936, however, an Edinburgh University medical student named David Mackenzie had quit his studies to join the International Brigade fighting in the Spanish Civil War, and this relative skirmish was of course followed by the outbreak of renewed worldwide conflict in 1939.

The frequently contradictory ideological positions and practical proposals adopted throughout the country during this decade were replicated within the university itself, with calls for international reconciliation and unilateral disarmament sitting side-by-side with those for increased use of 'Collective Security' and more conventional forms of armed alliances. In general there was an ever-increasing concern about the deteriorating international situation, and concomitant calls for both defensive and offensive military solutions.

Perhaps the most significant change among Edinburgh University students was a dramatic upsurge in support for the Marxist philosophy and agenda, and to a lesser

¹ Mackenzie, David The Spearhead. Experiences with the First Brigade of the International Column in Spain Unpublished typescript from c late 1936 provided by the author's grandson, Mr Richard Hunter, Edinburgh City Archivist.

extent other extremist and anti-democratic creeds such as Fascism. Outright pacifism was also endorsed, but as an increasingly minority position as the decade wore on. Overall the 1930s represented a period of unprecedented levels of political and ideological activity within the student body, as reflected in the number of articles and letters published in The Student, debating returns, Rectorial election results, student memoirs and other relevant records.

This chapter will therefore examine the period to both outline and attempt to explain the transformation in mood among students from one of relative optimism about international peace and stability to that of either wholehearted support for, or at least resigned acceptance of another major conflagration.

Looking first at health and fitness related matters, as already touched upon the measures implemented by the University authorities in 1930 to extend and rationalise the provision of the relevant facilities were to some extent at least introduced in response to vigorous campaigning on the part of the student body. Furthermore as the 1930s progressed The Student provided ever more extensive coverage of and encouragement towards exercise and sporting activities at the university. In total twenty-nine articles on the subject of health and fitness were published in the journal between November 1929 and November 1939, the second highest number on any single topic. From 1936 onward a special 'Athletics Number' of the paper was also produced at the end of each session.

Throughout the period at hand the many implicit and explicit connections between health and fitness training and military affairs were fully acknowledged. The armed forces background of the newly installed Director of Athletics and Physical Training, Colonel Ronald Campbell, was emphasised in an introductory piece in The Student

in February 1930 which stated, “Colonel Campbell comes to the post with a unique record behind him. He served in the South African War with distinction, won the D.S.O. in the late war, and received the C.B.E. in 1923. He has specialised in physical development, becoming inspector of Physical Training to the British Army.”¹ The item concluded that, “The appointment of Colonel Campbell to the University Staff is a step in the right direction.”²

Another editorial in The Student in January 1937 criticised a speech given to the Edinburgh City Business Club by Professor Lelean, holder of the Edinburgh University Chair of Public Health, with, “We do not question his right to sneer at peace-lovers because they suspect that the purpose of physical training of the unemployed is to fit them for war. But if the Professor wishes pacifists to forget their suspicions, he should arrange for less militaristically inclined gentlemen to make the speeches they suspect.”³

The Edinburgh University Athletics Club itself introduced a weekly magazine, The Varsity Athletics News in 1932, and this provided a platform not only for coverage of sporting events but also the political and ideological issues surrounding them. For example the recurrent possibility of fitness training being made compulsory both within the wider community and university itself during this period has already been mentioned, and a letter published in the magazine in 1936 again underlined the explicitly military dimensions involved. “The fact that the Government has only awakened to the fact that the nation is C3 when the Army needs recruits, is sufficient ground for objecting to compulsory physical training.” Furthermore, “Like armaments and hostels, physical culture is not absolutely

¹ The Student 4 February 1930 p 313

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. 26 January 1937 p 145

objectionable; but when used by a reactionary government or equally reactionary authorities these must be resisted. The next step after compulsory P.T. is Labour Service and the state-controlled production of cannon-fodder.”¹

A 1939 editorial from the Varsity Athletics News underlined the strong links between the University Athletics Club and Officers’ Training Corps by pointing out that, “There are many ways of spending Victoria week-end. One may return to the bosom of one’s family; one may attempt to revise the winter term’s work, one may sleep, or one may attend an O.T.C. Camp.” The piece concluded, “Owing to the fact that four-fifths of V.A.N. staff choose the latter course, and are spending the week-end in residence at the Dreghorn Camp, there are likely to be several gaps in this week’s issue. We humbly crave your pardon.”²

Another inter-linked feature of the period under scrutiny was the notable increase in popularity of countryside-based health and fitness pursuits. An Edinburgh University Rambling Association was established in early 1930, and activities such as hill-walking, hiking and hostelling promoted and engaged in by most other student societies. For example in May 1938 the journal of the Cosmopolitan Society advertised, “Rambles - Every Sunday morning a band of 15 to 20 Cosmopolites meet at Tollcross or St Andrew Square, as pre-arranged, to spend the day on the hills, under the leadership of Mr Hopfan.”³ Three years earlier the same publication argued that, “To the student with his long vacations the Scottish Youth Hostels offer a wonderful opportunity of seeing the Scottish countryside in an inexpensive manner.”⁴

¹ The Varsity Athletic News No 98 3 December 1936 p 5

² Ibid. No. 168, 26 May 1939 p 4

³ Ibid. No 10, May 1938 p 26

⁴ The Cosmopolitan No 1 January 1935 p 14

The Scottish Youth Hostel Association was established in 1931, and the then Edinburgh University Rector's Assessor, future Unionist candidate for the position of Rector itself (in 1936) and Fellow of the British Eugenics Society, Lord Salveson, became one of the organisations first Honorary Presidents. The Scotsman covered the opening of the first S.Y.H.A. hostel at Yarrow near Selkirk with, "Lord Salveson, in declaring the hostel open, said this movement was one that was started by youth...Scotland was a little behind in starting that movement. It had already grown to enormous proportions in Germany."¹ Lord Salveson continued, "The Germans were anxious to make their people A1 and not C3 (hear, hear). Accordingly they had opened hostels throughout Germany, resorted to by tens of thousands."²

Emeritus Professor Otto Schlapp was also present at this inauguration and stated that, "The Germans had had the inestimable advantage of having been beaten in the war and having to find their feet again. That movement was one of the ways in which they were finding their feet and recovering the physique and moral of the nation."³

Formal youth hostelling was introduced into Germany in 1909 by the school teacher Richard Schirrmann (1874-1961), and in 1939 Professor P. J. Müller, former International President of Hostels, commented that, "Schirrmann was in some ways the forerunner of National Socialism in his study of folk-lore, customs, dances, and his love of national culture."⁴

German youth hostelling was in turn heavily influenced by the contemporary *Wandervögel* movement and according to the social historian Peter Staudenmaier, "The *Wandervögel* youth movement was a hodge-podge of counter-cultural elements

¹ The Scotsman 4 May 1931, page 14

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Biesanz, John 'Nazi Influence on German Youth Hostels' in Social Forces Vol. 19, No. 4, May 1941 p 558

blending neo-Romanticism, Eastern philosophies, nature mysticism and hostility to reason.” He continued, “Their back-to-the-land emphasis spurred a passionate sensitivity to the natural world and the damage it suffered...Most of the *Wandervöge* were eventually absorbed by the Nazis.”¹

Indeed Baldur von Schirach (1907-1974), Nazi *Reichsjugendführer* (National Youth Leader) during the 1930s, emphasised this relationship when he stated “No youth leader of our time will deny the merits of the *Wandervögel*. That youth movement was as right for its own time as the Hitler Youth is right for the present.” Furthermore, “The idea of self-leadership on the part of the youth, the declaration to fight against the standards of bourgeois society, the will to folkdom, homeland, or comradeship and many others, are akin to the feelings of the H. J.”² These strong ideological connections between the *Wandervögel* movement and Nazism were further underlined by The Jewish Virtual Library, which pointed out that, “By the 20th century it [the swastika] was a common symbol used in Germany to represent German nationalism and pride, for example, as the emblem for the *Wandervögel*.”³

In any case an article in The Student of March 1931 looking at the establishment of the S.Y.H.A. reveals both the main motivation behind the organisation and the leading role played in its establishment and promotion by Edinburgh students. “Briefly, our premier inspiration came from Germany; there we have the spectacle of a nation, financially hard hit, erecting in response to a desire for outdoor exercise and an awakened appreciation of Nature’s beauty.”⁴ Though the Scottish Youth Hostels Association already consisted of members from Edinburgh and Glasgow, and it was

¹ Biehl, Janet and Staudenmaier, Peter Ecofascism: Lessons from the German Experience Edinburgh: AK Press, 1995 p 35

² Baldur von Schirach, Document 1458-PS ‘The Hitler Youth’ Koehler und Amelang: Leipzig, 1934

³ The Jewish Virtual Library <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/Swastika.html>

⁴ The Student 1 March 1931 p 283

hoped in the future those from other cities such as Perth, Dundee, Stirling, Inverness and Aberdeen, the item concluded that, "It...will remain with Edinburgh University to lead the way."¹

As with Germany itself, alongside the purely recreational aspects there were at least some elements of militaristic, Social-Darwinian and neo-fascistic influences behind these nature-based health and fitness activities in Britain. For example Lord Clydesdale (1903-1973) was at various times Conservative M.P. for East-Renfrewshire, Treasurer of the Boys Brigade, member of the Scottish Advisory Council for Physical Training, Squadron Leader of the City of Glasgow Squadron of the Auxiliary Air Force, the first pilot to fly over Mount Everest, and in 1935 another unsuccessful Unionist candidate for the Edinburgh University Rectorship. The historian Neil Stewart pointed out that, "In the youth-hostelling movement he saw a 'pilgrimage of youth' in 'common quest for that true recreation which is as much spiritual as physical and which contact with Nature and the elements alone can provide.'"²

Stewart continued, "Such views, coupled with his preference for simple peasant society, his evident regrets at the onward march of industrialisation and urbanisation, and his devotion to the development of healthy athleticism in society, particularly among the young, would undoubtedly have made Clydesdale susceptible to the idealism of the European Radical Right, especially Nazism, with its mystic overtones of blood and soil."³ Indeed in 1936 Lord Clydesdale attended the Berlin Olympic

¹ The Student 1 March 1931 p 283

² Stewart, Neil M., Fellow Travellers of the Right and Foreign Policy Debate in Scotland 1935-1939 University of Edinburgh Ph.D. Thesis, 1995 pp 187-188

³ Ibid.

Games as a guest of the Nazi regime, was given an inspection tour of Luftwaffe airfields by Hermann Goering, and dined with Hitler himself.¹

Bringing the topic back to the University itself, as well as being first Director of Athletics and Physical Training Colonel R. B. Campbell was also a prominent member of the Military Education Committee. In these joint capacities he sought to encourage and co-ordinate both health and fitness activities among students and concomitant increases in membership of the Officers' Training Corp. In 1931 Colonel Campbell instituted an annual event which in many ways brought together all these inter-linked strands. The first 'Assault-At-Arms' pageant held in the McEwan Hall included "fencing, boxing, gymnastic displays, and a Balaclava Melée contributed by the O.T.C."² The general flavour of these jointly militaristic, patriotic and fitness-orientated events which were held throughout the 1930s and up to the eve of World War Two can be gleaned from the following Student coverage of two subsequent pageants:

The Second Assault-at-Arms took place in the M'Ewan Hall on Friday and Saturday, 4th and 5th March [1932]. On Friday night General Sir Percy Radcliffe, G.O.C., Scottish Command, presided, at the Saturday Matinee. The O.T.C. Infantry Unit gave the show a final send-off with their Pipe Band....At the end, a new effort, was a final tableau with the performers massed round the central pyramids of the P.T. Squad, and the Athletic Club flag breaking over all, what time the majority of the audience rose patriotically to their feet at the strains of 'Scots Wha Hae.' On Saturday night, 'God Save the King' took its place.³ Assault-at-Arms [1934] The Annual Assault-at-Arms has become a pleasing and regular event of the Spring Term. The programme, which was well arranged and offered plenty of variety, opened as usual with pipe music by the O.T.C. pipe band. Two items, a demonstrator of Skandinavian exercises and two Greek dances, were performed by women students alone. There were also displays of fencing with the foil and sabre, boxing and sword-dancing, some vigorous and keenly contested tugs-of-war....Outstandingly effective were the display of club-swinging, in which lighted clubs were used in the darkened hall, the demonstration of gymnastics with apparatus improvised from beer-barrels

¹ Stewart, Fellow Travellers of the Right p 182

² The Student 3 February 1931 p 243

³ Ibid. 10 April 1932 p 338

and sticks, and the lightning drill executed with admirable polish and precision by members of the O.T.C....Regarded merely as entertainment, the Assault was highly successful, but it had a greater importance as a not unnecessary reminder of the excellence and variety of physical training available in the University.¹

Colonel Campbell's overall organisational and promotional efforts were evidently successful, as Table 7 below reveals a dramatic increase in participation in official physical exercise classes over the decade, incidentally one which closely mirrors that of membership of the Officers' Training Corps (see Table 12).

Table 7 – Male Students Enrolled in Physical Exercise Classes 1932-1938²

Date	Number of Members	Percentage of Matriculated Male Students³
1931-32	325	7.5
1932-33	386	9.1
1935-36	560	14.4
1936-37	560	14.6
1937-38	639	17

Turning now to the related topics of eugenics and race, a letter published in The Student in November 1933 highlighted the fact that contemporary concerns about health and fitness were frequently coupled with the concept that such abilities were to some extent at least heritable. The correspondent suggested that “Until a youth is twenty years of age *at least* [original italics] one hour a week should be devoted to P.E. under a competent instructor. Therefore I look to the day when it will be compulsory for all students under twenty...to train their bodies for one hour

¹ The Student 19 April 1934 p 275

² Edinburgh University Court Signed Minutes Various dates

³ Female students were encouraged to take part in alternative organised exercise activities such as country dancing.

weekly.”¹ However the proviso was made, “Unless they are so unfortunate that they must be certified as ‘not fit to stand it’; no stigma being attached to this, of course. It isn’t the son’s fault that the father never developed his body and thus gave the world a son unfitted for the physical - as opposed to the mental - side of life.”²

Debates over the perceived need for restrictions on procreation were a recurrent feature of the period as they had been during the 1920s. For example in February 1933 and November 1936 the motions ‘That Birth Control is Necessary’ and ‘That the Future of Civilisation Depends on Birth Control’ were defeated by narrow majorities at Diagnostic and Dialectical Society meetings respectively.³ The most significant of such events, however, took place in 1931, when one of the most heavily attended Union Debates of the entire period under scrutiny endorsed the proposition ‘That the Time is now Ripe for the Sterilisation of the Unfit’ by a 76% majority.

The Student explained that, “The first Debate of the Session was held on Friday, 13th November. There was a crowded attendance, both on the floor of the House and in the gallery.”⁴ Moreover, “The Motion was proposed by Professor Crew, who said that the unfit multiplied more rapidly than the fit. The existence to-day of mentally defective children was the direct outcome of the prior existence of mentally defective parents...The Motion was carried by 122 votes to 38.”⁵ As mentioned in the previous chapter Professor Crew also gave frequent talks to student societies on the topic of

¹ The Student 28 November 1933 p 117

² Ibid.

³ Diagnostic Society of the University of Edinburgh Minute Books. 15th January 1929-13th April 1944 and Dialectic Society of Edinburgh Minute Book 1931-1954 For a complete list of ideological debates during the 1930s see Appendix 8

⁴ The Student 1 December 1931 p 113

⁵ Ibid.

eugenics throughout the decade, and in 1939 succeeded in having the subject introduced into the Public Health medical curriculum.

There is also extensive evidence of an upsurge in racially derogatory attitudes among students at Edinburgh University during the period at hand. For example in February 1930 The Student published a review of the book Jungle Gods by Captain von Hoffman. This article commented that, “The black, he insists, has a logical moral code of his own... ‘Thou shalt not speak the truth’”¹ In another section of the book an ‘ancient and shrivelled’ African chief allegedly asked upon looking into a mirror, “Where is this baboon?”², and The Student reviewer revealed a general support for such material and attitudes by concluding, “Captain von Hoffman touches on many aspects of native life, always informatively, and with a grace and style which is refreshing.”³

In May 1931 a ‘Colour Ban’ was imposed by two Edinburgh cafes, and a Student editorial on the topic stated that, “We confess that for the proprietors of the cafés concerned we have a certain sympathy.”⁴ By way of explanation the article continued, “Inspired, as every good proprietor should be, by a desire to see their establishments patronised by as large a crowd as possible, they found themselves confronted by a number of ‘valued British patrons of both sexes’ who objected strongly to the indignity of eating food in the presence of persons whose skins were darker than their own.”⁵

A report produced by the University Court Committee on Overseas Students in March 1935 further underlined these pejorative attitudes by pointing out that, “There

¹ The Student 1 December 1931 p 353

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid. 26 May 1931 p 359-360

⁵ Ibid.

is a discouraging fact concerning lodgings which must be mentioned; it is that landladies with decent lodgings, who themselves are quite ready to receive coloured students are prevented from doing so, because of the white students who object to having coloured men in the house”¹

Later in the decade a number of articles and letters appeared in the student newspaper concerning the then fashionable jazz musical form, with one writer claiming that “‘Swing’ is not in any way intellectual, it is rather the degenerate caterwauling of African half-wits.”² The author continued, “The abandonment of large masses of low-grade negroes to the sensual pleasure that is supposed to exist in ‘swing’ is surely one of the worst advertisements that there could be for ‘swing music.’”³ He concluded by stating, “At a performance by Duke Ellington which I witnessed in Chicago, the scenes that ensued when the orchestra were ‘giving all they had’ were frankly disgusting, and the bestial howls that accompany Herr Hitler’s speeches are nothing compared to the raucous, incoherent mouthings of the negroes in the audience.”⁴

In the same year an article appeared in The Student entitled ‘Colour-bar in Theory or Practice?’ This recounted the experiences of two Indian students during the Christmas festivities at the University with the individuals involved claiming that, “It was a waste of time and money and loss of self-respect and prestige.”⁵ They were treated “like untouchables” and “even the high officials of the Students’ *Representative* [original italics] Council and some of the enthusiastic members of the

¹ Edinburgh University Court Papers: Report of the University Court Committee on Overseas Students 18 March 1935

² The Student, 19 November 1938 p 91

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid. 18 January 1938 p 133

Student Christian Movement, who are very laudable in professing their love of all nations, were no less embarrassed by the presence of these two aliens and were equally enthusiastic in inflicting rebuking glances. During their stay of about two hours in the Maxime Hall not a single one of their fellow students spoke a single syllable to them.”¹

There is little evidence of the race-related anti-Irish sentiment prominent in both Scotland as a whole and Edinburgh in particular at this time being present among the university students, though a letter to The Student in January 1939 did speak of Irish immigrants as “swarming over in ever-increasing numbers.”² On the other hand there was some degree of support for the contemporary Celtic racial and cultural movement which sought to eulogise and draw together the Gaelic-speaking peoples of Scotland and Ireland.

For example in his address to the Edinburgh University Celtic Society of October 1932 Mr Angus Robertson, President of the Scottish Gaelic cultural group *An Comunn* claimed that, “The gift of the Celt to Europe was a gift of genius. It was quite true, he admitted, that the Celt was not politically developed, but what he did give to the world, he gave ungrudgingly - namely, the outpourings of his soul.”³ Mr. Robertson concluded that “The typical Celt...was nearest to the perfect man, but he lacks unity.”⁴

As well as such positive claims Celtic racial concepts also frequently involved pejorative ones about those deemed to be ‘Anglo-Saxon’ or other ethnic types. For example in 1933 the same society held a discussion about, ‘The Causes of Partition

¹ The Student 18 January 1938 p 133

² Ibid. 17 January 1939 p 140

³ Comunn Gaidhealach Oil-Thigh Dhun-Eidinn Edinburgh University Celtic Society, Minutes, 15th October 1927-23d January 1937 p 226

⁴ Ibid.

in Ireland', during which Mr. Hector MacIver, "in an extremely interesting speech discussed the racial question."¹ Mr MacIver claimed that, "The people of the south were 100% Celts and very deeply separated from the North who were South Scots. He touched on the attempt to raise a Gaelic culture in Gaelic and he conclude by saying that is was surely possible that they could do the same thing in Scotland."²

Dr. James Pittendrigh MacGillivray (1856-1938), a prominent Scottish artist and King's Sculptor in Ordinary for Scotland from 1923, was selected to be the Scottish nationalist candidate at the university Rectorial election of November 1932. In a letter to The Scotsman supporting his candidature Dr McGillivray stated that, "I am a Scot of blood and breeding, and I love my own country and the heart-and-soul things of its people."³ On the other hand, continued the sculptor, "While acknowledging the splendour of individuals, I am not a lover of the English en masse...in such a conglomeration of everything ethnic from aborigines, Roman Catholics, to Welsh, it would be hard to fix a national type, either of character or physiognomy."⁴

The poet Christopher M. Grieve (1892-1978), better known as Hugh MacDiarmid, took over from Dr MacGillivray as the Scottish nationalist rectorial candidate in both the 1935 and 1936 elections. Writing in 1927 Grieve explicitly turned the contemporary anti-Irish immigration argument on its head by stating, "Dealing with the question of Irish Immigration, the Committee on Church and Nation of the Established Church of Scotland says: 'There are only two explanations of the great racial problem that has arisen in Scotland - the emigration of the Scots and the immigration of the Irish people. There does not seem to be any hope of alleviation of

¹ Edinburgh University Celtic Society, Minutes p 276

² Ibid. p 276

³ The Scotsman 4 November 1932 p 11

⁴ Ibid.

this problem in the future. All available evidence points to its intensification. The outlook for the Scottish race is exceedingly grave.”¹ The writer concluded, “This is true - but not exactly in the sense the Committee intends....Scotland has been steadily subject to Anglicisation ever since the Union.”² Moreover in an election piece printed in The Student in October 1935 Grieve stated that, “Our language in spirit, tone, idiom is conditioned by a bothie-gutter-Scots basis or a Gaelic environment among all who aren’t Anglophile aliens in their homeland.”³

The frequently martial dimensions of all such racial theorising were underlined in a review of the book The Scottish War of Independence by Ewan Macleod Barron in The Student which argued that, “Twenty years ago Mr Barron proved conclusively that to Celtic Scotland, not to the Teutonic Lowlands, as had been the accepted view, was due the successful issue of the War of Independence.”⁴

Turning now to the issue of anti-Semitism, the writer and academic David Daiches (1912-2005) was the son of the prominent Edinburgh Rabbi Salis Daiches, and studied English Literature at Edinburgh University in the early 1930s. In his autobiography Two Worlds Daiches makes no mention of any anti-Jewish prejudice at the institution, indeed he speaks of his time there in entirely positive terms. “I found myself joining societies, writing for the student magazine, making friends among my non-Jewish fellow students.”⁵ The piece continues, “I discovered to my delighted astonishment, that my fluency in speech and facility in turning verse, which had helped to amuse the family at home but which I had not till now thought

¹ Grieve, C. M. Albyn or Scotland and the Future London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1927 p 72

² Ibid. p73

³ The Student 22 October 1935 p 19

⁴ Ibid. 15 January 1935 p 206

⁵ Daiches, David Two Worlds Sussex: Sussex University Press, 1974 p142

to be in any degree out-of-the-way qualities, made me a popular and sought after figure at the University.”¹ David Daiches went on to have a highly successful career as a scholar and critic of literature, was a founding member and Professor of English at the University of Sussex in the 1960s and 1970s, and held the post of Director of the Centre for Advanced Studies in the Humanities at Edinburgh University itself between 1980 and 1986.

On the other hand frequent expressions of anti-Jewish prejudice among students can be detected in the records from this period, for example an overtly anti-Semitic cartoon involving a stereotyped caricature and entitled ‘Have Nothing to do with Money-lenders’ appearing in the student paper in November 1930.² Controversy was also provoked by Professor Otto Schlapp’s speech of 1932 mentioned in the previous chapter entitled ‘The Nazis and the Jews’, with one correspondent to The Student responding to a critic of the talk with, “I hear in your pages the echoed voice of international Jewry trying to lash the youth of Edinburgh back to that mad hatred which swept our previous prosperity into the graves in Flanders’ fields.”³

Shortly after the Nazi takeover in Germany in January 1933 a group of German exchange students had an item published in The Student which stated that, “We have seen the Highlands, the lochs and glens, the dark heather and misty hills, we stayed in barns and youth hostels, and enjoyed the shelter of many a humble cottage. We will never forget all this. But if we come back some time and find the glens populated by Jews, it would hardly add to our love of Highland scenery.”⁴

¹ Daiches, Two Worlds p 172

² The Student 4 November 1930 p 55

³ Ibid., 4 November 1932 p 384

⁴ Ibid. 2 June 1933 p 364

Furthermore an article entitled 'Polish Minorities' appeared in The Cosmopolitan magazine in 1938 and this piece claimed that, "There are over 3,000,000 Jews in Poland (10 per cent of the total population) most of whom have a poor knowledge of the Polish language, and are ignorant and live in extreme poverty." Furthermore, "Emigration of Jews is greatly encouraged by the government, because they work nearly all the trades and crafts in the small towns, thus barring the way to them to the native Polish population."¹

Finally after the outbreak of war in September 1939 a letter appeared in The Student entitled 'The Money Changers', and this argued that,

In the Student of 17th October representatives of the Tory, Liberal, Labour and Communist parties voiced their opinions of why we are at war. They failed to deal with the real cause - the money-changers. They were responsible for the last war and they are responsible for this. They gained by the last war and they will gain by this. Who are these 'money-changers'? Most of them are Jews, some are British; they control the Press; they control the B.B.C.; they finance and therefore control the Political Parties. It is they who have whipped up British Public Opinion through the press and the B.B.C. into belief in this war, into a false patriotism which sends British manhood to be maimed and blinded and killed...The Master Jesus had an antidote for the money-changers - but they crucified him. We must have an antidote also. The voter must rise up and do his own demanding. He must set up his own parliamentary candidate and give him a mandate and vote for him. Only thus can he call a halt to this massacre in a human slaughter-house; to this wilful destruction of the youth of our race."²

Indeed the overall ideologies of Nazism and Fascism in general enjoyed at least some degree of support among Edinburgh University students during this time. The motion, 'Is Fascism Making for the Happiness and Prosperity of Italy' was discussed by the Edinburgh Ladies Debating Society in November 1933, and passed by 21

¹ The Cosmopolitan No 10, May 1938 p16

² The Student, 1 October 1939 p 47

votes to 4, or an 84% majority.¹ Furthermore during a Historical Society discussion on the topic, 'Modern Political Ideals: Italy, Russia, and Japan' in 1935 one of the contributors stated that, "The Fascist ideal was good, but the methods used for attaining it wrong. Admitting that there were defects on the system obtaining in Italy she emphasised that things were better there now, as a result of Fascist organisation, than they had been in the chaos that succeeded the war."² The speaker concluded that, "Italy received a new sense of power, and a higher standard of life as a result of the establishment of Fascism."³

Also in 1935 General Sir Ian Hamilton, then Rector of the University, visited Nazi Germany to retrieve a set of regimental drums captured during World War One. Upon his return to Britain Sir Ian stated in The Cosmopolitan that, "[Germany] is a nation become conscious of her strength. With her it is a darn sight better to be friends than disparaging critics. The people one meets everywhere in the streets give the impression of having just received a great delivery. They feel, so to speak, that they have come back to life."⁴

Shortly before this account the same magazine had published a propagandist piece praising the Nazi ideology and regime entitled 'Principles of National Socialism'. In this article the academic Dr E Kreitz argued that, "National Socialism does not mean a continuous line of reforms of present institutions, but a total change in the mentality of the people through a long process of education. The growing generation will be able to fill the frame that is being built by Hitler, and so guarantee the future

¹ Rae, Lettice Milne (ed) Ladies in Debate. Being a History of the Ladies' Edinburgh Debating Society 1865-1935 Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1936.

² E.U. Historical Society Minute Book 1934-36 8 November 1935

³ Ibid.

⁴ The Cosmopolitan No 2 Summer 1935 p 10

state.”¹ Furthermore, “One of the main principles of National Socialism is that of race purity which is misunderstood so often abroad...Every race has its peculiarity which is valuable in itself, and through the maintenance of this the race is best able to offer its cultural contributions to mankind in general.”² Dr Kreitz concluded with, “But the secret of the success of National Socialism is the faith and confidence in the great Leader of the German Nation and in his mission...Germany with her dense population, without colonies, wealth, currency, or raw materials, is inspired only by a united will to love in peace and honour.”³

Both specifically Scottish and British varieties of generally fascistic ideas and agendas also received some degree of endorsement at the university during this period. The pan-Celticism mentioned above and Scottish nationalism in general involved at least some extreme-Right Wing strands, for example in 1932 C. M. Grieve supplied a piece entitled ‘A Mass-man or Noble-Man’ for Dr Macgillivray’s rectorial election pamphlet Scottish Action. This article argued that “Absolute clearness on this issue on the part of Edinburgh University electorate will be the best possible evidence of Scotland’s return to real values, and will have important repercussions not only throughout Scotland but everywhere in Europe where ‘spiritual aristocracy’ (which should be the principle concern of all Universities) is struggling to reassert itself against ‘our hordes of sub-men.’”⁴

The presence of at least a few supporters of the British Union of Fascists at the university was also evident throughout this period. For example The Student coverage of a major Union debate of November 1933 concerning the motion, ‘That

¹ The Cosmopolitan No 1 January 1935 p 9

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Scottish Action No 1 1932

this House Deplore the Rise of Fascism' noted that, "It was a novel and heartening sight to see the floor of the House filled to capacity and the public galleries crammed to the point of discomfort...There was an air of expectancy pervading the whole House, which was not diminished when the leaders for the Negative appeared on the opposition benches clad in black shirts." The motion was passed by 89 votes to 49, which meant that 35% of this large turnout of students were explicitly prepared to back the general fascist ideology and programme. The following year an item in the same paper entitled 'Medical Musings' claimed that "There are indications in other quarters that the average medical student is getting increasingly interested in politics...There are not a few ardent Communists and Fascists in our midst"¹. Finally as late as February 1939 a letter in Varsity Athletics News entitled 'Barnetson and the Blackshirts' stated that, "It has been decided to establish in this University a National Socialist (or Fascist) Society."²

There were also many ideological expressions which, though not directly connected to any specific political movement or party had distinctly fascistic overtones. For example in early 1935 a student named George Percy Stilley claimed in a letter to The Student that, "Mankind is still, unfortunately, far from the idea of world brotherhood, and there are still among us those who will and can resort to arms to obtain that they want if they cannot obtain it by other means."³ He continued, "The struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest still goes on both in the animal kingdom and among the various races of mankind. Man's racial characteristics cling to him like shadows in the sunlight."⁴ Mr Stilley concluded, "Speaking as an O.T.C.

¹ The Student 23 January 1934 p 179

² Varsity Athletics News No 161 24 February 1939

³ The Student 19 February 1935 p 275

⁴ Ibid.

man, I do not desire war, but I desire to see the country adequately insured against the fires of war....So, gentlemen and comrades, three cheers for the British Army and her sister services, our noble and ever-vigilant guardians.”¹ Another letter from the same student in 1937 condemned student pacifists for their “lamb like bleatings about militarism and Fascism or any kind of -ism with the two exceptions of Communism and Socialism.”²

Later in the decade the guest speaker invited by the Edinburgh University Unionist Association to a Union Debate of February 1938 was Captain A. H. Maule Ramsay (1894-1955), the MP from 1931 for South Midlothian and Peebles. His appearance at this event was advertised in The Student with, “‘Political Union Debate’. Captain A. H. Maule Ramsay...has been amongst the most prominent supporters of General Franco in this country, and has spoken many times in various parts of the country on his behalf. He is a first class propagandist and distinguished himself in the Great War.”³

During the late 1930s Captain Ramsay expressed strong support for not only Spanish Nationalism, but also Italian Fascism and German Nazism, including the latter’s core anti-Semitic elements. Captain Ramsay was interned under the Public Order Act (1936), Defence Regulation 18b after war broke out, and looking back at this pre-war period he claimed that, “In most countries concerned a few voices were raised in an endeavour to expose the true nature of these evils. Only in one, however, did a political leader and group arise, who grasped to the full the significance of these happenings, and perceived behind the mobs of native hooligans the

¹ The Student 19 February 1935 p 275

² Ibid. 9 February 1937 p 195

³ Ibid. 1 Feb 1938 p 159

organisation and driving power of world Jewry. The leader was Adolf Hitler, and his group the National Socialist Party of Germany.”¹

Turning now to the seeming ideological and practical antithesis of Fascism, that of internationalism, the most popular political position adopted among students during the early 1930s was indeed that of a vigorous support for the League of Nations and its proclaimed attempts to bring about worldwide stability and peace. The Cosmopolitan Club mentioned before was established in 1931 as a consolidation of the previous International Club and League of Nations Club, affiliated to the British Universities League of Nations Society, and by 1935 its membership of 180 was second only to that of the Officers’ Training Corps among student organisations.²

Looking back at the society in 1986 James Livingstone (1912-1991), who was a prominent student activist during the early 1930s and Secretary of the University Labour Club from 1930 to 1931, claimed that “The ‘Cosmop’ or Cosmopolitan Club was a wonderful institution.”³ He outlined the club’s origins with, “Sometime in 1930 Brebner Paterson, editor of The Student, wrote a challenging article, ‘The Stranger Within Our Gates’. Brebner was an electric figure, not only a writer but a debater and student politician of verve and energy; I think he was President of the Unionist Association. He insisted that it was time Edinburgh gave a warmer welcome to our overseas students, particularly the black or brown ones.”⁴ Livingstone also pointed out that, “The internationally-minded students concerned had the help of a wonderful Quaker family, the Ludlams, who threw open their home, Tyne Lodge, in Grange Loan every Sunday evening, and who by the warmth of their hospitality and

¹ Ramsay, Captain A. Maule, The Nameless War Reading: The Bear Wood Press, 1992 p 48

² The Student 17 November 1936 p 74

³ The University of Edinburgh History Graduates Association Newsletter No 10 November 1987 p 6

⁴ Ibid.

their constant and sympathetic interest did more than anyone else to make everything go well.”¹

The author gave a further flavour of these meetings and the extent to which they were able to attract prominent external speakers by relating that, “At Cosmop meetings we never knew whom we would meet when we dropped in on Sunday evenings; three might be simple conversation among ourselves with perhaps a few songs; sometimes German Leider; once at least I remember a French recitation.”² He concluded, “Quite often some notable visitor to Edinburgh would be invited and would chat with us. I remember among many others Archbishop Temple, Lord Lothian (Philip Kerr), Krishna Menon and Dr A. G. Frazer.”³

Indeed due to its ever-increasing popularity the hosts of the Cosmopolitan Club mentioned above were forced to take extraordinary measures, as an item in the society’s magazine illustrates. “In October of 1936, the numbers had increased so much that a wall was knocked down to add another room...and when one occasion there had been 280 persons present it was clear that steps must be taken to limit the numbers, it was decided that the limit should be set at 200 students.”⁴

To some extent this very well-supported student organisation did act to counter the ever-increasing nationalistic sentiments of the 1930s. For example in 1934 retiring president J Graham Young stated in his Valedictory Address that, “What is this spirit in the world today which is making the world paralytic with fear? In Germany the passion of hatred makes all Europe aghast, and in no country in the world will you find an absence of it. Young people today are taught to hate.” Mr Young continued,

¹ Edinburgh History Graduates Association Newsletter p 6

² Ibid. p 7

³ Ibid.

⁴ The Cosmopolitan No 10 May 1938 p 22

“Rabid nationalism is conditioning the future lives of thousands of young people even now. And when there is no hate, there is that national vanity which makes those despair who think of its consequences. It can be found in almost every country and in every newspaper.”¹

On the other hand as mentioned before the specific interpretation of internationalism commonly adopted by both the Cosmopolitan Club at Edinburgh University and indeed the League of Nations movement in general frequently acted to bolster rather than undermine the basic ideology and ethos of nationalism. The following editorial in The Cosmopolitan of January 1935 illustrates this point.

The spirit of internationalism is gradually becoming more attractive to numerous home and overseas students; nevertheless many misconceptions of its meaning are prevalent. Internationalism, it is sometimes asserted, implies a disregard of one's racial and national origins. Such a conception of harmony will inevitably retard our progress towards universal harmony; for the practice of internationalism must be inspired by and based upon the system of nationalities...So deeply rooted in the individual is this sentiment of nationality, that even when he leaves his native land and dwells amongst another people, his national traditions do not slumber but actively permeate his being, inform his thought, and direct his conduct...It is not the sentiment of nationality but the perversions of that sentiment which are a growing menace to the world.²

In other words patriotism, far from being a barrier to world integration and peace was deemed to be a necessary and beneficial precondition. As a consequence throughout its period of existence The Cosmopolitan carried a whole series of articles vigorously promoting Scottish, Australian, Indian, Canadian, Polish and indeed German nationalism right up to the outbreak of World War Two itself.

Furthermore in 1935 the Historical Society discussed the motion, ‘That the Road to Internationalism Lies Through Nationalism’. One of the speakers for the negative

¹ The Cosmopolitan No 12. May 31st 1934 pp 360-362

² Ibid. No 1 January 1935 pp 2-3

recognised the inherent contradictions in this approach by stating that “Nationalism and internationalism were fundamentally opposed; nationalism was that doctrine which takes the good of the state to be the highest good. Internationalism, he thought, denoted the ideal of a common good.”¹ However the proposer Mr Ross argued that, “No international structure could be built except on stable national foundations. Nationalism was the demand for more or less definite ascertainable section of society to express its ethos under the aegis of a nation state.”² The motion was passed by a narrow majority.

There were also overtly and increasingly militaristic dimensions to the internationalist approach popular during the 1930s, especially those revolving around the concept of Collective Security. The writer and polemicist Norman Angell has been mentioned before as a participant in the pre-WWI Union debate ‘That Military Power is Socially and Economically Futile’, and in the summer of 1935 he also provided an article entitled, ‘The ‘Absolute Pacifist and the Collective System’ for The Cosmopolitan.

In this piece Angell emphasised the fact that, “I believe in armed defence - please accept that as final. But there are two methods of armed defence available; the old, each for himself method, and the method of collective defence, indicated in the Covenant of the League. Which of these two methods do you regard as the lesser evil?”³ Norman Angell answered his own question with, “I reply that if you must use arms for defence, they are less likely to provoke war if linked clearly and visibly to the collective system instead of to the old method of each his own defender. If you

¹ E.U. Historical Society Minute Book 1934-36 25 October 1935

² Ibid.

³ The Cosmopolitan No 2 Summer 1935 p 3

are determined either to retain the armed anarchy or make an armed society, far better to make an armed society.”¹

The Rector elected in 1936, Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby, maintained this theme in his rectorial address with, “Is it too much to believe that the human intellect is equal to the problem of designing a world state wherein neighbours can live without molestation; in collective security?”² He concluded, “It does not matter what the state is called; give it any name you please: League of Nations; Federated Nations; United States of the World. Why should there not be a World police; just as each nation has a national police force?”³ In November 1937 a Student article contended that, “To maintain this law and order we submit that there should be an effective League of Nations (of all nations) whose authority must be accepted by its members.”⁴ The piece concluded that, “This authority must be imposed, if necessary, by an International Police Force, just as we accept without question the existence of a police force within a single State.”⁵

Indeed in 1935 the League of Nations Union in Britain had organised a ‘Peace Ballot’, or mass nationwide survey of attitudes to various forms of disarmament and the potential future pursuit of warfare. In spite of the ballot’s name this exercise was very much an ideological and practical double-edged sword, as both the questions and results indicate:

1 Should Great Britain remain a Member of the League of Nations? Yes, 11,090,387. No, 355,883.

¹ The Cosmopolitan No 2 Summer 1935 p 3

² World Police for World Peace. Being the Rectorial Address delivered at Edinburgh University on 28th April, 1936 by Field Marshal The Rt. Hon. Viscount Allenby, C.G.B., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O. The New Commonwealth. A Society for the Promotion of International Law and Order: London, 1936 p 9

³ Ibid.

⁴ The Student 30 November 1937 p 91

⁵ Ibid.

2 Are you in favour of all-round reduction of armaments by international agreement? Yes, 10,470,489. No, 862,775.

3 Are you in favour of an all-round abolition of national military and naval aircraft by international agreement? Yes, 9,533,558. No, 1,689,786.

4 Should the manufacture and sale of armaments for private profit be prohibited by international agreement? Yes, 10,417,329. No, 775,415.

5 Do you consider that, if a nation insists on attacking another, the other nations should combine to compel it to stop -

(a) by economic and non-military measures: Yes, 10,027,608. No, 635,074.

(b) if necessary, military measures: Yes, 6,784,368. No, 2,351,981

Margot Gale was one of the many Edinburgh University students who assisted in the distribution and collection of the Peace Ballot forms, and she later explained that, “Volunteers, of which I was one, took the voting papers round to thousands and thousands of homes, and the result was that over ten million citizens signed the paper to the effect that they supported the system of collective security, and over six million that they would support the use of military force to this end. I took forms door to door in Craiglockhart and again in Barnton.”¹

Turning to another at least quasi-internationalist approach, as mentioned before the Communist Party of Great Britain was formed in 1920 as a branch of the Comintern, which itself was the international organ of the Soviet Union. As such British communists and fellow-travellers tended to closely follow the foreign policy line of the USSR, which in the early 1930s meant a vigorous encouragement of both revolutionary agitation within, and international warfare between non-communistic states including the UK itself.

A speech by Professor Harold Laski (1893-1950) cited in The Student in April 1934 outlined this approach. “Quoting Lenin, he said there were necessary the following - the machinery of government must be in ruins, the armed forces must be

¹ Margot Kettle Papers CP/IND/KETT/01 pp 9-10

disloyal, there must be a revolutionary temper amongst the working classes, [and] a revolutionary party to lead.”¹ Professor Laski also pointed out that, “The Russian experience showed that success depended largely on the aftermath of an unsuccessful war.”²

The dramatic increase in the threat posed by Fascistic states during the 1930s, in particular Nazi Germany from 1933 onwards, meant that by the middle of the decade the USSR and its Comintern agencies were seeking a ‘Popular Front’ with all willing anti-fascist organisations and countries. Partly because of this, and mirroring the country as a whole, Communism became increasingly popular at Edinburgh University during the early 1930s. By 1935 the Edinburgh University Labour Club had been replaced by a Marxism-dominated EU Socialist Society. It was the outbreak of civil war in Spain in July 1936, however, which represented the greatest galvanising event of the period. Thereafter a relatively small number of dedicated Left-leaning students at Edinburgh were able to achieve a notable degree of ideological and political influence.

Margot Gale (born 1916) who was introduced above as an Edinburgh University political activist of this period came from a Theosophist family background. She explained in her memoirs that, “The basic tenet was that every creature was the brother of every other. I use the word ‘creature’ advisedly, because it extended to animals, birds, indeed plants and trees.”³ At the age of twelve Gale won an Edinburgh League of Nations Union prize for her essay entitled ‘Organising Peace’, and in 1933 she became the Secretary of the Edinburgh League of Nations Youth Group.

¹ The Student 19 April 1934 p 263

² Ibid.

³ Margot Kettle Papers CP/IND/KETT/01 p 2

The following year Margot Gale began classes as a non-graduating student at Edinburgh University, and also attended a congress of the National Union of Students. Her experience there marked the beginning of a switch away from an outright pacifistic approach to a more militant one. Gale pointed out that she had two alternatives, “To take part in groups which assumed the future of mankind would be best assured by a path of evolution, or to join groups which saw the future as one of revolution.”¹ Partly because she wished to expand her knowledge beyond her Theosophist upbringing the young student chose the revolutionary classes, and was “Rather surprised to find myself in considerable sympathy with what they said.”²

After taking up a full-time course at Edinburgh University in autumn 1934 Margot Gale continued to be heavily involved in politics, both inside and outside the institution. In 1936 she attended the League of Nations Union Congress in Geneva, and shortly afterwards Bill Carritt, the National Secretary of the League of Nations Union Youth Groups revealed that both himself and other members of the Union she was familiar with were members of the Communist Party. Though Margot Gale did not join the Young Communist League until August 1938 she continued to be extremely active in the umbrella groupings of the period which were to some extent Marxist fronts, including the British Youth Peace Assembly and Emergency Youth Peace Campaign. Within the university itself Gale was a member of the Students’ Representative Council, President of the Women’s Union during 1937-38, and known as “one of the most active workers for World Peace in the University.”³

Like most commentators of the period Margot Gale also emphasised the critical impact of the Spanish Civil War on Left-wing politics and attitudes to international

¹ Margot Kettle Papers p 8

² Ibid.

³ The Student 2 November 1937 p 49

affairs, and she specifically mentioned the Edinburgh University student whose experiences in the International Brigades were cited at the beginning of the chapter. She pointed out that, "David Mackenzie was reported killed in Spain. We collected considerable sums for medical aid in his memory - and he returned safe and sound. I heard him speak on his return."¹

In contrast to Margot Gale, David Mackenzie (1916-1969) came from an extremely conventional background. His father was Rear-Admiral William Beveridge Mackenzie, he was brought up on the Caldarvan estate near Loch Lomond, and attended both Marlborough College and Oxford University before taking up a medical course at Edinburgh in 1935.² At some stage prior to 1936 Mackenzie also became involved in communist politics, and he explained his particular motivation for going to Spain with, "Fascism was advancing, that war was coming nearer with every foot Franco's troops gained in Spain. And it would be Scotland tomorrow, unless that advance was stopped."³ The medical student also revealed the frequent contradictions inherent in both Marxist and general ideological attitudes at this time when he pointed out that "It was hatred of war which had landed me in left-wing politics...But I could fire a rifle fairly accurately, and I had a vague idea about military training, remnants of three years in the O.T.C.. These qualifications were useful in Spain. I was virtually useless at home. I went."⁴

In any case his four month stint with the British machine-gun section of the first International Brigade involved a great deal of intensive military action, and indeed courage. During an action near Boadilla del Monte a German Heinkel strafed his

¹ Margot Kettle Papers CP/IND/KETT/01 p 13

² Information derived from an interview with David Mackenzie's grandson Mr Richard Hunter, Edinburgh City Archivist

³ Mackenzie, David The Spearhead p 3

⁴ Ibid.

position and an explosive bullet burst on his steel helmet. Mackenzie explained, “I was knocked out for a moment. John Cornford¹ picked me up, found I was still kicking, and allowed me to walk by myself. I took up the Lewis Gun and started to walk along the ditch.”²

The horrors and atrocities frequently involved in the Spanish conflict were further emphasised with, “I was asked to come and assist in burying a young French Y. C. L. [Young Communist League] boy. He had got separated from his patrol at night, a straying Moor had come up behind him, stabbed him in the back and gouged out his eyes. He was the boy who had annoyed me with his singing on the train from Paris.”³ Furthermore, “Of the four English who had gone up to Casa del Campo on the night of November 7th, McLaurin had been killed, Steve Yates was missing and later found cut in half by machine gun bullets, Symes was mortally wounded, and the news of Hinks was uncertain.”⁴

In spite of these near-constant dangers, and indeed the false rumours of his death, David Mackenzie returned safely from Spain in December 1936. As indicated by Margot Gale above he thereafter embarked on an extremely vigorous and successful propagandist and recruitment campaign. Numerous articles were published in the national press, and he carried out speaking tours of both the U.K. and United States. A promotional poster advertised these talks, though with some factual exaggeration. “Hear David Mackenzie: Veteran of Six Months of Fierce Fighting Which Stopped Franco and Saved Madrid. Brilliant Young Orator and Pamphleteer in the Cause of

¹ A well-known Trinity College, Cambridge, historian. Killed in action in Spain 28 December 1936

² Mackenzie, The Spearhead p 58

³ Ibid., p 30

⁴ Ibid.

Peace.”¹ In any case these lectures inspired at least some other volunteers to join the International Brigade, including David Stirrat of Glasgow who explained, “I had heard talks by Phil Gillan and David Mackenzie...These fellow had been to Spain and come back wounded or whatever. I had a great admiration for these people because I understood why they had gone and they had the courage to go.”²

David Mackenzie also produced an article for The Student in which he argued that “What I have said should have convinced anyone of the difference between the volunteers of the [International] Column and the conscripts of Franco....They recruit by conscription; enlist or be shot. I have seen, on the other hand, the terrific enthusiasm on the Government side.”³ He also emphasised the importance placed by the pro-Republican campaign on pressurising both the Labour Party and National Government to discard their non-interventionist and sanctions-based policies. “Spain needs help; help for the non-combatants and help for the Government. Let us see that the National Government of this country is forced to restore to the legally elected Government of Spain the right to purchase what it requires to defend itself.”⁴

Mackenzie subsequently fought for the British Army in Burma during World War Two, though his involvement in both the Spanish Civil War and communist politics led to discrimination in terms of his rank of entry. After the war he sought to put his political ideals into practice by engaging in subsistence crofting, and also became a well-known author on both farming in general, and goat husbandry in particular.⁵

¹ Access to poster during interview with Mr Richard Hunter

² MacDougall, Ian Voices from the Spanish Civil War. Personal Recollections of Scottish Volunteers in Republican Spain 1936-39 Polygon: Edinburgh, 1986 p 23

³ The Student 9 February 1937 p 188

⁴ Ibid. p 189

⁵ Mackenzie, David Farmer in the Western Isles London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1953; and Mackenzie, David Goat Husbandry London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1957

The publication of The Student article mentioned above coincided with the editorship of Malcolm MacEwen (1911-1996), the third Marxism-influenced student of this period to be looked at. MacEwen was born in Inverness in 1911, and like David Mackenzie came from a relatively wealthy and prominent background. His father was Sir Alexander MacEwen, leader of first the Scottish Party in 1931 then the Scottish National Party from 1934 to 1936. After a private school education Malcolm MacEwen embarked on a forestry-based science degree at Aberdeen University in 1929, and also joined the horse-artillery brigade of the local Territorial Army as a Second Lieutenant.

After a short time at Aberdeen MacEwen decided to transfer to Edinburgh University to take degrees in both Arts and Law with a view to becoming a solicitor like his father. As he explained in his autobiography throughout this period, “Not even the appalling winter of 1931-32, which saw massive demonstrations of protest against unemployment, cuts in benefit, and the means test and the Invergordon naval mutiny against cuts in service pay, could stimulate my dormant interest in politics.”¹

Shortly afterwards, however, a serious motor-cycling accident led to both the loss of a limb and emergence of a pronounced political sensibility. “It was the experience of six months in bed with nothing to do but read followed by a prolonged convalescence after the amputation of my leg in December that jerked me out of an over-extended adolescence, pushed me out of the ‘Terriers’, turned me into an anti-fascist socialist, and sent me racing down the path which led to Communism.”² As well as constant reading in the daily press about the emerging ‘Nazi menace’,

¹ MacEwen, Malcolm The Greening of a Red London: Pluto Press, 1991 p 13

² Ibid. p 14

MacEwen's political transformation was encouraged by an insight into the iniquities of the then largely private and non-comprehensive medical system in Britain.

After returning to Edinburgh Malcolm MacEwen immediately joined the University Socialist Society, and as he put it, "Far and away the most important thing the Socialist Society did for me was to introduce me to Marca Burns, the daughter of Emile Burns, who was at that time head of the Communist Party's education department and a member of its Political Bureau – the Party's inner leadership."¹ After a talk given by Emile Burns in Edinburgh in the autumn of 1935 MacEwen and several other students decided to form a communist block within the Socialist Society, and also join the external Young Communist League.

Malcolm MacEwen further explained his motivations for these moves with, "It was above all the campaign for a united front of the working-class parties against fascism, and broader popular front, launched by Dimitrov [George] at the Seventh Congress of the Communist International in August 1935, that attracted me into the Communist Party."² He continued, "The winters of 1933-4, 1934-5 and 1935-6 saw hunger marches, mass demonstrations and riots on a scale unknown since the Chartist agitation of the 1840s which were twice successful in forcing the government to withdraw punitive scales of unemployment benefit. It was the communists who stepped into the breach and organised the unemployed when the Labour Party and Trades Union Congress (TUC) failed to do so."³

In any case the systematic and disciplined approach of the Communist Party at this time was highlighted by the fact that, "The first thing it did when it found out it had a

¹ MacEwen, The Greening of a Red p 19

² Ibid., p 33

³ Ibid.

student group on its hands was to set up some classes for us in Marxism.”¹ In December 1935 MacEwen was also invited to a conference of communist students in Marx House, London, where he was, “Impressed in particular by the eloquence of John Cornford, a Cambridge student who was killed in Spain just after Christmas a year later.”²

During his time at Edinburgh the young communist also became both a member of the Students’ Representative Council and as mentioned before editor of its newspaper from 1936-1937. He explained that, “Inside the University I felt an irresistible urge to push what seemed to me to be a moribund, self-satisfied and reactionary institution into attitudes more appropriate to the middle of the twentieth century.”³ MacEwen became the first chairman of a new and short-lived S.R.C. body known as the ‘Reform Committee’, which called for among other things the right to elect students to the post of Rector, a joint male and female Union, greater integration between the Arts and Sciences, the ending of compulsory lectures, and a wholesale broadening of the social base of university education.

This radicalism was very much mirrored by The Student during his time as editor. For example a pamphlet by the Socialist Medical Association entitled Gas Attacks: Is the any Protection? was covered with, “The astonishing fact is that none of us, the millions of people in the street, want war at all. It is a comparatively small class of the population that are busy manufacturing this choking, lung-tearing, murdering hell - the class who say protection is easy because they will be protected.”⁴ The editorial condemnation in January 1937 of Professor Lelean’s approach to health and fitness

¹ MacEwen, The Greening of a Red p 20

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. p 24

⁴ The Student 1 December 1936 p 113

has been covered already, and the Professor of Public Health was also heavily criticised in The Student for his introduction of 'Anti-Gas' classes later in the same year. "The peremptory introduction of this subject into the Medical Curriculum was almost military in character. A protest was inevitable on these grounds alone. It was intimated that cards would be taken, and it was assumed that attendance was compulsory."¹ The piece continued, "Professor Lelean placed certain facts before the class in his first lecture. These fact were so presented as to make his audience feel that war was inevitable. Such an impression is defeatist in the extreme, and must be destroyed if peace is to be preserved."²

In February 1937 the following vehement response was given to criticisms of The Student published in the Daily Mail. "From these intellectually-starved effusions of jargon, bastard slang, and alleged news pour forth columns of hypocritical abuse of practically anything in this world which is worthy of encouragement."³ The newly formed communism-influenced Left Book Club and its publications were also fully and positively covered in the student paper during this period.

It was, however, the Spanish Civil War which resulted in the most extensive propaganda within The Student under MacEwen's leadership. David Mackenzie's report of the conflict of February 1937 has been mentioned already, and in general the paper offered up a whole series of opinion pieces, articles and letters vigorously calling for financial and general support for the Republican side. The most significant and representative editorial was printed in January 1937 and entitled 'Cowardice or Folly'.

¹ The Student 17 November 1936 p 65

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. 9 February 1937 p 171

In this article MacEwen promoted the basic ‘Popular Front’ communist line of the time in arguing that, “Property interests alone support Franco: the grandees, drawing huge incomes from the sweated toil of a poverty-stricken, landless peasantry; the Church, wealthy and responsible for a profound illiteracy;...and the capitalists.”¹ He continued, “Until Fascism is killed stone dead, there can be no peace. We say Britons never shall be slaves!...Where will Fascism strike next? Are we always to be cowards in the face of danger, are we never going to take risks for peace, never to call the bluff of strutting demagogues?”² The Student editor concluded, “There could be no more ironic comment on the depth of our passing for liberty and our understanding of recent history than that Russia, labelled dirty, inefficient, anti-democratic, should help Spain while Britain, land of the free and castigator of injustice, should do nothing. *O tempora! O mores!*”³

In his autobiography Malcolm MacEwen underlined the contemporary importance of the Spanish conflict by stating, “If the Abyssinian betrayal was the decisive factor in my initial decision to move in a communist direction, the Spanish Civil War completely dominated my political life and thinking, and that of the entire Left movement, for nearly three years from July 1936.”⁴ In any case MacEwen graduated in 1937 and after leaving university became first a solicitor then unofficial Communist Party candidate in the East Dunbartonshire by-election of 1941. In his election literature he promoted the Marxist ‘People’s War’ approach to World War Two prior to the entry of the Soviet Union in claiming that, “This war, like that of 1914-1918, is a struggle for world domination between the ruling classes of Germany

¹ The Student 15 January 1937 p 139

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ MacEwen, The Greening of a Red p 36

and Britain.”¹ MacEwen continued, “[However] to seek a way out of this war by surrender to Hitler would be an unspeakable crime. To seek a way out as the Coalition Government does is to sacrifice untold millions of lives for Imperialist ends.”² He concluded, “There is a third way out, and that is for the Labour Movement to resume its independence and participate in the struggle for a People’s Government which will defend us from Fascism at home and abroad.”³

Malcolm MacEwen was unsuccessful in this election attempt, and he subsequently became one of the principle writers and journalists on the communist newspaper The Daily Worker. He quit the journal over its stance on the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956, and was also expelled from the Communist Party in the same year. He did, however, retain his Marxist beliefs which were increasingly combined with an environmentalist, or ‘green’ perspective. Under these joint influences MacEwen was one of the main promoters of the conservation movement in Britain, became especially involved in the administration of the Exmoor National Park Authority during the 1970s, and died in 1996.

Returning to the University itself, the propagandist efforts of Malcolm MacEwen and other communism-influenced students at Edinburgh during the mid-1930s were evidently at least partially successful, as the voting records for the series of party political debates held in the Union in the latter part of the decade reveal:

¹ Malcolm MacEwen. The Communist Party candidate. Dumbartonshire by-election. Polling day, 27th February, 1941 Alexandria, 1941

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Tables 8 and 9

‘Who Goes to Parliamentary Debates?’¹

Total Votes Cast (1938-39)

	Feb.	May	Nov.	Jan.
Liberal	103	60	39	39
Scot. Nat.	55	57	49	-
Socialist	123	95	75	51
Unionist	48	52	75	62

Percentage of Total Votes Cast

	Feb.	May	Nov.	Jan.
Liberal	32	23	15	26
Scots. Nat.	17	22	23	-
Socialist	37	36	30	34
Unionist	14	19	32	40

On the other hand a strong revival in Unionist support in late 1938 and early 1939 can be gleaned from these statistics. Furthermore, as pointed out before by far the best statistical gauge of overall student attitudes at the institution can be obtained from Rectorial election results.

Table 10

Percentage of overall student body voting for each candidate in Edinburgh University Rectorial Elections 1929-1939²

	1929	1932	1935	1936	1939
Liberal	15	-	20	16	-
Scots. Nat.	-	4	2	7	-
Socialist	8	20	-	18	10
Unionist	22	64	29	25	26

¹ The Student 14 February 1939

² A proportional representation system was used and the figures presented reflect votes cast in the first round

Table 11

Percentage of actual votes cast for each candidate in Edinburgh University
Rectorial Elections 1929-1939¹

	1929	1932	1935	1936	1939
Liberal	33	-	38	24	-
Scots. Nat.	-	6	6	11	-
Socialist	19	30	-	27	27
Unionist	48	64	56	38	73

Comparing these debating and rectorial figures, it can be seen that whilst the Socialist group at the university was able to call on relatively strong support at Union events, their overall backing among students remained consistently much lower than that enjoyed by the Unionist Society and its Rectorial candidates.

Turning finally to the frequently intertwined topics of conventional nationalism and militarism, as indicated before the course of the 1930s was marked out by a steady retreat from faith in both disarmament and international reconciliation, and this pattern was replicated at Edinburgh University.

During the early part of the decade The Student commemorated the annual Armistice Day with at least partially pacifistic appeals. For example an editorial of November 1930 proclaimed, “Of one thing we may be sure: war is a psychological factor and must be treated psychologically. The only certain method of ensuring peace is to create a public opinion in which the idea of war as an expedient is never considered even for a moment.”² The following year the paper repeated this basic point by arguing that, “War was no grand, uplifted stage for heroic actions...It was a

¹ A proportional representation system was used and the figures reflect votes cast in the first round

² The Student, 18 November 1930 p 51

thing of mud and filth, of rottenness and hatred - hatred not of the nominal enemy, but of all mankind...The plain truth is that there must be no next war.”¹

This was to be the last such straightforward official anti-war opinion piece of the decade. There did, however, continue to be pleas for unilateral disarmament and the abolition of armed forces in the form of general correspondence and other published items. For example in 1934 a review of the book War by C. Delisle Burns in the student magazine stated, “That Dr Burns should be able to treat war as ‘a psychological and moral disease’ no longer ‘regarded as inevitable by the majority’ is a comforting indication that society is advancing.”² The following year the previous calls to disband the Officers’ Training Corps were renewed in a letter which declared that, “All this talk of the will for peace is meaningless so long as we lend our support to the O.T.C. or any other such body. If the will for peace were a fact in the ‘Varsity the O.T.C. would automatically cease to exist”. The item concluded with the declaration, “Hang tradition, and abolish the O.T.C.!”³

Indeed as late as October 1938 a Student Pacifist Association was formed on the basis of a manifesto which proclaimed, “We believe that on rational and utilitarian grounds resort to war as a means of settling national or international problems is unprofitable and futile. Destruction to life and civilisation in modern war is vastly greater than any possible gain.”⁴ Furthermore, “We believe that modern war is irreconcilable with the spirit of Christian charity. We believe also that active non-violent methods are more effective than war as means of securing peace and

¹ The Student, 3 November 1931 p 82

² Ibid. 15 November 1934 p 127

³ Ibid. 29 January 1935 p 236

⁴ Ibid. 18 October 1938 p 1

justice.”¹ On the other hand this small grouping never received official University recognition, and in general the outright pacifist position was an increasingly tiny minority one.

Turning then to conventionally patriotic attitudes, the first thing to note is that Edinburgh students maintained their tradition of electing Rectors from strongly martial backgrounds during the early to mid 1930s. Winston Churchill held the office between 1929 and 1932, and his elevation was greeted with, “‘Hail to the Chief’! The Right Hon. Winston Churchill has been elected Rector of the University...The philosophy of life, with which the great book ‘The World Crisis’ is instinct, is a philosophy vibrant with faith in the destiny of the British race.”² The military dimensions to his career were later underlined in the student newspaper with, “He left the Army early for financial reasons, but his first love still retains much of her influence. The military metaphors of his speech, the intenseness of his own career in the war bear record of it.” Furthermore, “He must see the war from the line at Antwerp, rather from the room in Whitehall....Like his friend, the late Lord Birkenhead, he is a staunch and loyal comrade.”³

General Sir Ian Hamilton succeeded Churchill in 1932, and an electoral piece again emphasised his martial exploits. “The Gallipoli Campaign was Sir Ian’s greatest military task. It was an Epic of Empire if ever there was one in the history of the world; a mighty gesture by a far-flung power. Led by a Scottish Highlander, men came from every quarter of the globe to fight for the Motherland....In Sir Ian Hamilton we have one of Scotland’s greatest sons.”⁴

¹ The Student 18 October 1938 p 1

² Ibid. 19 November 1929 p 97

³ Ibid. 10 March 1931 p 299

⁴ Ibid. 18 October 1932 p 15

General Hamilton was succeeded by Field-Marshal Allenby, and the latter's candidature was promoted with, "It is these egregious abilities as a soldier and a statesman which makes him pre-eminently suitable for the office of Lord Rector of Edinburgh....The name of Allenby will be counted amongst the greatest who have devoted their lives to the British Empire." The final Rector elected in the pre-war period, Sir Herbert Grierson, was an Edinburgh University emeritus Professor of Rhetoric and English Literature, and the official socialist candidate. However Professor Grierson received significantly fewer first round votes than the main Unionist nominee, and was only elected due to the proportional representation system in place.¹

A rejection of outright pacifism and support for British patriotism was also indicated by debating results during the 1930s. For example the motion, 'That this House Approves of Unilateral Disarmament' was defeated at a Historical Society meeting in February 1936², a major Union debate of 1937 rejected the proposition that 'The British Empire is a grave menace to World Peace' by 76 votes to 65, and the Diagnostic Society approved the proposal that 'Conscription is a benefit to Youth' in late 1938.³

Furthermore from the mid 1930s onwards The Student increasingly played host to correspondence and other articles which promoted rearmament and straightforward nationalism. For example in 1935 a letter somewhat ironically entitled 'The British Internationalists. A Way to Peace?' was published, and this stated that the objectives

¹ The first round voting figures were: Dr. J. D. Pollock (Unionist) 793; Sir Herbert Grierson (Socialist) 664; Dr. Chalmers Watson (Liberal) 571; Mr C. M. Grieve (Scottish Nationalist) 266; Lord Salvesson (Unionist) 134

² E.U. Historical Society Minute Book 1934-36 7 Feb 1936

³ Diagnostic Society of the University of Edinburgh Minute Books. 15th January 1929-13th April 1944 1 November 1938

of this new grouping included “Peace in the world [and] security for Britain and the British Commonwealth of Nations (*i.e.* that Britain should have the chance of settling all her internal problems in peace and without the threat of external interference).”¹ The item also called for “rational and reasoned rearmament on the part of Great Britain”, claiming that “Britain cannot expect a good hearing at Geneva or elsewhere much longer unless the national and imperial defence forces are increased. Manpower alone commands respect amongst the nations.”² The author concluded that, “If we are to give the rest of the world the chance to share in the liberal views and advanced civilisation in this country, we must be prepared to defend the peace which we all desire. If Britain or the British Empire were to disintegrate now, the world would go back a hundred years.”³

The following year a correspondent claimed that, “It is evident that D is one of a group within the University which is working tooth and nail to undermine the spirit of patriotism and loyalty to King and Country... Rally, patriots, before it is too late!”⁴ and in 1938 an article promoting membership of the Officers’ Training Corps asserted that Great Britain, “Is a Democracy of almost unparalleled stability throughout the past centuries, with a record of progress as regards the freedom of the individual second to none.”⁵

Later in the same year the Munich crisis had appeared to make war imminent, and a letter in The Student argued, “If we want to defend in the future the interests of Britain and the British Empire should we not strive towards that national unity that

¹ The Student 10 December 1935 p 97

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid. 1 December 1936 p 110

⁵ Ibid. 22 April 1938 p 147

would make Britain stronger than all our A.R.P. precautions put together?”¹ In the same edition of the paper the formation of the Student Pacifist Association was greeted with, “O, ye pacifists, how do you think you are going to avert war by your little wailings and writings?...How do you think you are going to dictate to the world that there should be peace and no war if you have no strong arm behind you? How is it that Herr Hitler has succeeded in getting what he wanted in the recent crisis?”²

The correspondent continued, “Because he was strong, and so strong that he knew he would be able to get what he wanted because no one could prevent him...If, then, we are able to stop his getting all he desires how are we able to do it? By throwing away our army and navy and all our defences and saying we don’t believe in war? No, but by being prepared and being strong enough to be able to dictate to Herr Hitler instead of letting him dictate to us.”³ He concluded, “Should we be involved in war through no fault of our own, our pacifist friends will willingly see their companions and country-men killed in defence of their land while *they* attend to their consciences....Is peace then such a little thing that it is not worth fighting for?”⁴

Indeed throughout the period at hand The Student generally acted as an enthusiastic recruiting agent for the Officers’ Training Corps. The pacifistic editorials of the early 1930s were accompanied by vigorous calls to enlist in the organisation, for example in November 1930 a piece entitled ‘*Arma Virumque Cano*’ argued that, “The renewal of the annual ‘pacifist’ controversy in our correspondence columns and the passing of another Armistice Day provide us with an excellent pretext for drawing the attention of the student body to that much-maligned

¹ The Student 15 November 1938 p 81

² Ibid. p 65

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

organisation, the O.T.C. We believe that every male student would do well to join one or other of the units of the University Contingent.”¹

The paper featured regular appeals for enrolment of this type, an occasional column entitled ‘O.T.C. Notes’ which became weekly from early 1939, and major three to five page illustrated specials covering the annual O.T.C. camps. The Student also called for robust reactions to any anti-war letters published, for example the one cited above from November 1935 which concluded with, “Hang tradition, and abolish the O.T.C.!” was accompanied by an ‘Editor’s Note’ stating that, “The above letter revives a controversy which flourished in earlier Students...We have no official opinions on the matter, but we hope that some O.T.C. members will reply in a future issue.”² The desired responses included the argument that, “If he [the author of the above letter] considers that submission is better than resistance, then it would certainly be hypocrisy for him to join an O.T.C.; but there are still some who, while honestly and actively desiring peace, are convinced that peace can be bought at too dear a price.”³

Another item promoting the Corps proclaimed that, “The cadet in the Infantry Unit prides himself in the knowledge that he is receiving the maximum amount of training for the duties of an infantry officer in the field...he is fully cognisant of the fact that, as a result of the splendid training he as received in the O.T.C., he can offer himself as a vital and competent link in the defence system of our country.”⁴

¹ The Student, 18 November 1930 pp 76-77

² Ibid., 29 January 1935 p 236

³ Ibid., 19 February 1935 p 275

⁴ Ibid., 19 October 1937 p 26

In any case as indicated by Table 12 below the S.R.C. backed and general University-wide campaign to increase membership of the Officers' Training Corps during the decade was evidently highly successful.

Table 12 – Membership of the Officers' Training Corps 1929-1939¹

Date	Number of Members	Percentage of Matriculated Male Students (%)
1931-32	331	10.6
1933-34	385	12.2
1934-35	416	13.9
1935-36	440	14.8
1936-37	448	15.3
1938-39	550	19.0

By September 1939, therefore, civil defence training had become an accepted feature of University life, membership of the Officers' Training Corps had risen to well above its peacetime establishment of five hundred, and in general the student body was fully prepared for the onset of the ensuing hostilities.

On the other hand the preceding vigorous controversies over the highly complex and frequently contradictory issues of the 1930s clearly had an effect. Like that of the staff, the general attitude adopted among students toward the second major war of the century was one of resigned stoicism rather than any great enthusiasm.

I am supposed to reveal in three hundred well-chosen words 'the issues at stake' in this war from the point of view of the University student. Unfortunately, nobody quite knows what these issues are. Nor can we take refuge by inventing idealistic slogans such as were in vogue from 1914-18. It takes a lot of faith to believe in 1939 that we are fighting a war which is to end war, or to make a world fit for heroes to live in...I take this opportunity of extending the best wishes of the Student's Representative Council to the *cives* for the year 1939-40. It will be tragic and nasty year, but it will not be dull.²

¹ Figures taken from University of Edinburgh. Senatus Academicus. Signed Minutes, notes obtained from the current Adjutant of the Edinburgh University Officers' Training Corps, and The Student

² The Student 17 October 1939 p 14. 'The Universities and the War' by J H. Brotherston, President of the S.R.C. 1938-39

Conclusion

It has been far easier to write of 1914 than 1939. That time is now so far away that we can judge it impartially. To-day history is being made, and in the heat of strife, and in the bitterness of mind which afflicts so many of us, because our blindness alone made this war possible, it has been practically impossible to write about these times without prejudice. Let us remember that students as a class pay more heavily than any other. This was true of the last war, and we feel that before the last shot is fired it will be equally true of this one...a little clear thinking unbefogged by sentimentality or by party prejudice might have saved the world from a second blood-bath within twenty-five years.¹

It is evident then that throughout the period at hand there was a wide range of frequently contradictory ideological and practical influences acting upon and promoted by both staff and students at the University of Edinburgh, in particular those revolving around the issues of war and peace.

In the years prior to the outbreak of World War One pacifistic concepts were popularised by writers and polemicists such as Leo Tolstoy and Norman Angell. Moreover the Christian faith continued to be widely accepted during this period, including in Britain itself. Though all the churches, with the exception of small dissenting groups such as the Quakers adhered to the 'Just War' theory, they also promoted the basic idea that values such as egalitarianism and non-violence were worthwhile goals to be pursued. At a more fundamental level the existence of organised religion served to maintain the notion that both individual and group actions had ethical and spiritual consequences.

Alongside moral injunctions against violence practical schemes designed to overcome the syndrome of warfare through a combination of arbitration and disarmament were being launched, such as the Hague Peace Conferences of 1899

¹ Burns, J. H. and Sutherland-Graeme, Scottish University Edinburgh: Darien Press, 1944 p 21

and 1907. In general the idea that an emerging body of international law had at least some jurisdiction over national autonomy and behaviour, including the pursuit of warfare, became increasingly recognised over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Marxism was another avowedly internationalist ideology and agenda which first arose during the late-Victorian and Edwardian eras. Communist and communism-influenced socialist parties rapidly gained ground across Europe, and a proclaimed refusal to fight in any 'capitalist wars' was one of their basic ideological and practical positions. On the other hand the Marxist creed maintained that violence in general was not only permissible but a necessary engine for progress, and simply replaced the concept of international conflict with that of Class War. In any case when fighting actually broke out in August 1914 most of Europe's Left-wing groupings moved to a staunch support for their respective national causes.

Communism was in many ways a sect of the overall Social-Darwinist world-view which also emerged at this time. Darwinism was based on biological extrapolations from the natural world, and as such argued that all life, including humanity itself, was engaged in an evolutionary struggle known as 'The Survival of the Fittest'. This materialistic and atheistic philosophy also involved a rejection of any spiritual dimension to existence, which in turn tended to undermine the principle basis of morality itself. In terms of international affairs social-Darwinism manifested itself in the form of increased colonial competition, exacerbated national rivalries, the resultant formation of hostile military alliances and indeed to some extent at least the outbreak of war in 1914.

Looking at Edinburgh University itself the student body was evidently receptive to the pacifistic ideas proposed by Norman Angell, indeed shortly before the outbreak of war voted in favour of his own motion, 'That Military Power is Socially and Economically Futile.' Furthermore many members of the University staff had strong connections with German academic institutions, and this to some extent at least countered the increasing international tensions.

On the other hand Edinburgh University had pronounced historical and intellectual links with the various pseudo-scientific and social-Darwinian theories mentioned above. Charles Darwin himself had studied at the institution during the 1820s, and first developed his biological and evolutionary interests there. Furthermore one of the earliest texts promoting the idea of fundamental racial divisions and conflict among human beings was produced by the University anatomist Robert Knox in 1850, and Principal Sir William Turner was the main worldwide advocate of the racially-based theory of craniology.

Turning to specific developments during the inter-war years, there was a strong reaction against the syndrome of international warfare in the country as a whole during the 1920s and early 1930s. The League of Nations was established with the primary goal of preventing conflict, students at Oxford University expressed a refusal to fight 'For King and Country' in 1933, and the Pacifist Peace Pledge Union was established the following year.

These general trends had some influence within the University of Edinburgh itself, with the student body in particular widely endorsing the internationalist and reconciliatory ideas and agendas of the period. The majority of officials and members of staff also supported the League of Nations approach to international

affairs in general, and war prevention in particular. Indeed in 1930 the Principal and a number Professors took the unusual step of publishing a declaration in support of the conference being establish in Geneva with the ultimate goal of worldwide disarmament.

Extremist creeds of both Right and Left did achieve a limited degree of popularity among Edinburgh undergraduates, with Marxism in particular enjoying a relatively high level of influence and support during the mid 1930s. There was also widespread student involvement in the health and fitness movement of the inter-war years, as well as evident endorsement of eugenicist and racial concepts.

Looking finally at the practical dimensions of the issue, throughout the period covered by the thesis both the University authorities and Students' Representative Council wholeheartedly promoted the Officers' Training Corps. There was a mass response among students to the institutional and national military appeals in 1914, and though membership of the Corps declined in the immediate post-war years it climbed steadily to reach an all-time high by 1939.

A large part of the explanation for this pronounced military bias lies in the very strong links between University and state. For example it is often thought that government funding of higher education only became significant after World War Two, but in fact the average annual proportion of Edinburgh University income from state grants throughout the period at hand was a highly significant 38%.

Equally important was the large amount of graduate employment in both civil and military services, the personal connections of members of the academic staff with the highest levels of government and state, and the selection of leading national figureheads as University officials.

The first four decades of the twentieth century represented a period of unprecedented political ferment and international turmoil. World War One in particular entailed a dramatic switch from the limited conflicts of preceding centuries to that of total war involving entire populations. The University of Edinburgh played a full roll in this period both in its widely influential ideological and intellectual contributions, and the unusually heavy sacrifice made by its student body.

For Youth

And will they die so soon?
The wan light of the summer moon
Has not had time to touch their eyes.
They have not lived a day
Dreams fade as the dew
A thorn on the rose is lost:
They will be tossed
Into the hell of the battlefield.
We shall live on to remember them
Laughing boys not yet grown to men;
And our hearts will be sealed.²

² The Student 1 October 1939 p 29

APPENDIX I

Major Office Holders at the University of Edinburgh 1914-1939

OFFICE	HOLDER	PERIOD
Chancellor	The Rt. Hon. Arthur James Balfour M.P. (the Earl of Balfour from 1922)	1891-1930
	Sir James Matthew Barrie, Bart.	1930-37
	John Buchan, The Right Hon. Baron Tweedsmuir of Elsfield	1937-1940
Principal and Vice-Chancellor	Sir William Turner	1903-1916
	Sir James Alfred Ewing	1916-29
	Sir Thomas Henry Holland	1929-1947
Lord Rector	The Earl of Minto	1911-1914
	Lord Kitchener of Khartoum	1914-1916
	Admiral Sir David Beatty	1917- 1920
	The Rt. Hon. David Lloyd George, M.P.	1920-23
	The Rt. Hon. Stanley Baldwin, M.P.	1923-26
	The Rt. Hon. Sir John Gilmour, M.P.	1926-29
	The Rt. Hon. Winston Spenser Churchill, M.P.	1929-32
	General Sir Ian Hamilton	1932-35
	Field Marshal Lord Allenby	1935-36
	Sir Herbert John Clifford Grierson.	1936-1939

APPENDIX 2

University of Edinburgh Principal's Report Covering War-Related Activities 1914-18

The Principal of the University, Sir J. Alfred Ewing, KCB., F.R.S.

'The War and the University'

What did the University do in the War? What did the War do to the University? To answer these questions very superficially is all that can be attained within the limits of so short article. By no persons, perhaps, was the call of the war more clearly heard, more promptly and more generally obeyed, than by the members of the universities. And it may be doubted whether in any university the response was more instant than in Edinburgh, on the part alike of students, of graduates, and of the staff. In these days life seemed simple, simpler than ever before, far more simple than it seems now. The one dominating thought was how to give personal service. The way of duty was plain; few indeed could or did mistake it. To some university men it must have been a hard way - a way of distress and conscious sacrifice. Many indeed were stirred by the sense of adventure; a few may have scented the joy of battle - all had the satisfaction of doing what was obviously right. But among them there were doubtless those who saw the war as the cruel thing it is, an anachronism, the very negation of what university culture seeks to produce. Perhaps, however, their trained vision helped them to see early what soon became patent to all, that this war, forced upon us against our will, was no mere conflict of national aims, that the task of the Allies was nothing less than to save from disaster the Christian spirit of civilisation. And so, of their own free will, they went. A memorial volume, which is now being prepared for publication by the University, will contain a brief record of the war service of about eight thousand of its members. It will say what they did and what distinctions they won. And it will tell of more than nine hundred whose highest distinction was that they gave their lives. Long before compulsory service came into operation, the University was so much depleted of students and of junior staff that there was little left for conscription to do. Indeed by that time a slight but progressive recovery in numbers had set in, for medical students were beginning to be sent back to complete their curriculum, so that the urgent needs of the army medical service might be more effectively met. For the same reason other students of medicine were encouraged to remain at the University until they might become qualified. Other factors that affected the numbers in residence were the admission of women students of medicine, which took place in 1917, and the fact that many youths of about seventeen entered the University at that unusually early age, wishing to put in a year's attendance before joining the Army, and eager in most cases to prepare themselves for military service by devoting that year to the intensive training which was carried out, as a special war measure, by the Officers' Training Corps. What the Officers' Training Corps did to supply young officers with, at least, a good foundation of military training, is briefly detailed

in another article. It is one of the glories of the universities that they were able, through their Officers' Training Corps, to supply so large a nucleus of officers in the swift creation of the citizen army. Edinburgh did its full share, and, moreover, has the satisfaction of knowing that the Officers' Training Corps, as part of our system of national defence, was the creation of one of her own graduates. By that, and by the organisation of the Expeditionary Force, Lord Haldane has earned of the nation more gratitude than he has received. When I came to the University in the autumn of 1916 I found benches so sparsely occupied that one might almost have called them empty, and a staff many of whose members were absent on military duty or civilian war service. The remnants of the staff were grievously overworked, for each man was doing the duty of absent colleagues in addition to what was left of his own. As a rule he was also engaged in special war work: hospital service, lecturing to troops, promoting some of the multifarious activities associated with the war, investigating scientific war problems, even manufacturing war material. In such labours, and many more, the knowledge and experience, the force and ingenuity of the seniors found application, and thereby contributed to the winning of the war. While touching on the word of the seniors, both within the University and without it, I venture special tribute to that of the Deans, whose patriotic devotion did much to inspire the zeal of the younger men. If the war was a war of ideals, of characters, of personalities, it was none the less a war of technical appliances, both offensive and defensive, and all the expert skill in the country had to be thrown into the struggle. Here, as in other places, scientifically trained minds bent themselves to new problems. To give full details is not possible, but one or two items may be mentioned. Soon after the beginning of the war, the Professor of Chemistry, recognising the need for the high explosive, trinitrotoluene, and the possibility of its manufacture by a method which had not been then developed in this country, set up, in conjunction with one of his assistants, Dr Cumming, and a research student, Mr Romanes, a small factory in which it could be made. This was so successful that a much larger factory was soon opened at Craigmyle, still under the management of Professor Walker and his colleagues, in which the explosive, in a specially pure form, continued to be manufactured for the Government to the extent of some four or five thousand tones. At one time twenty women students of the department were engaged in the manufacture of the local anaesthetic novocaine. Later the investigation of certain new substances for gas-warfare engaged much attention. In the departments of Pathology and Bacteriology an investigation into the action of antiseptics, in which Dr Rettie took an important share, led to the introduction of 'Eusol' (Edinburgh University Solution), a cheap and easily prepared disinfectant, which owes its potency to the presence of hypochlorous acid. This was brought into extensive use for surgical purposes on all the fronts. Other work of that department was concerned with trench frost-bite, and with the use of charcoal as protection against irritant gases. The effects of such gases were also dealt with by the department of Physiology. It was shown how chlorine produces its fatal effects, and what treatment was advantageous. In the Physical Laboratory experiments were carried out on methods of detecting submarines, as well as work of a more routine kind in the testing of optical instruments. Much systematic testing was also done in the Engineering Laboratory, together with an

important research, in which the department of Botany was associated, on the suitability of home-grown timber in the manufacture of aeroplanes. Of the various kinds of work in other scientific departments, and in Medicine and Surgery, no account can be attempted here, but enough has perhaps been said to indicate that the University as a whole played a not unworthy part in the great national effort. In the administration of the University during the lean years of the war there was inevitably much anxiety regarding finance. The revenue, which depends very largely on the fees of students, suffered an immediate and serious drop; the aggregate deficiency of fees, judged by pre-war standards, was close on £70,000. The most stringent economy had to be practised, but it could not prevent the expenditure from exceeding the income. The resulting situation was, to some extent, relieved by a timely grant which the Treasury made to this and other universities, in view of their national character and of the loss to the State that would be implied in their becoming permanently crippled. With the return of peace the functions of the universities are again active; their services are more than ever in demand; their value as a national asset has never before been so emphatically recognised. To us who love our University this is very welcome, but it imposes on us a fresh obligation. We must make the best use of a widened opportunity; we must strive to be worthy of our honoured dead.¹

¹ The Student 28 May 1920, pp 11-13

APPENDIX 3

Female Students and World War One

‘Edinburgh University Women and the War’ By Mrs Chalmers Watson, M.D., C.B.E.¹

For over a century the majority of the educated women of the country had advocated the extension of the franchise to women, in order that they might take their share in the responsibilities of citizenship. In the struggle for emancipation the strongest argument advanced against the proposal was, ‘That women could take no part in war, and as all Government rested ultimately on physical force, women could not fight, and therefore must not vote.’ All this is now changed, and largely as a result of the useful contribution which the women of the country gave to winning the war, the franchise has been extended to women, who are now placed in a position of all but equality in every department of civic and national life. A few lines may be written on the part played by Edinburgh University women during the war. In estimating their work we have to realise that barely twenty-five years have passed since the University granted its degrees to women - the first M.A. being granted in 1893, and the first Medical degree in 1896. In this connection it is interesting to note the comparison between the early nineties, when the writer was one of half a dozen women students of Medicine working for the qualifications of the Royal Colleges, the University degree not then being available, with the conditions obtaining to-day, when several hundreds of women students are enjoying the privileges of University teaching, with all the facilities for obtaining a University qualification. The work done by women Graduates comprises activities in many types of national work. The women of the country as a whole rose splendidly to the demand for their voluntary mobilisation. They replaced men in all branches of industrial life. They took on clerical occupations in various Government departments, such as the War Office, Board of Trade, Admiralty, Labour, Censor’s Department, and others. They proved of value in occupying responsible positions in banks, insurance offices, &c., and large numbers of them, further, gave valuable assistance in nursing the sick and wounded, and in one direction or other caring for and helping the dependents of fighting men. In not a few of these directions women students or Graduates of Edinburgh University played a large part. We are here, however, more concerned with the directly professional work in which Graduates of the University played a prominent role, this being conspicuously revealed in the Medical profession. The strain thrown on the Medical profession through the war was very great, and the women Graduates of Edinburgh and other Universities proved their value by replacing doctors in various branches of the Public Health Service, some holding Medical Officer of Health posts for the counties or boroughs, others replacing School Medical Officers, or taking over general practices, or holding Resident Posts in Hospitals previously closed to women. The work done by women during the war period was not only of great national importance, but has been of great value to themselves in extending their opportunities and enabling professional women to be

¹ The Student 28 May 1920 pp 39-42

established in a position of much greater importance in the community. Special mention may be made of two particular departments of work which stand out pre-eminently in this direction, in which the organisers and leaders were women Graduates of Edinburgh University - namely, the Scottish Women's Hospitals and the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps. I. The Scottish Women's Hospitals. In September 1914 Dr Elsie Inglis asked the Army Medical Service Department for recognition to go out to France with a hospital unit, and she received the reply: 'My good lady, go home and sit still.' Undaunted by this initial rebuff she persevered and secured the assistance and co-operation of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies in the preparation of a hospital unit to be organised and run by women. A little later the recognition, so characteristically refused by her own country, was grateful given by the French and Serbian authorities. The promoters aimed at raising a sum of £50,000 for the equipment of one or more hospital units. The women of the country nobly responded to the appeal for funds. The work of the first hospital unit was in every way so successful that it grew by leaps and bounds, over £300,000 being collected by the Committee of the Scottish Women's Hospitals. Mrs Russell, M.D. (Brux.), who qualified in Edinburgh, was Hon. Secretary for the personnel, and during this time had full responsibility for the staffing of the units. These included women doctors - of whom twenty-five were Edinburgh Graduates - nurses, and ambulance workers, these being sent out to France, Belgium, Serbia, Corsica, and Russia. Their vicissitudes were many, some having to escape from Serbia, trekking across the mountains, and others being captured and kept prisoners of war for months. The originator and leader of the movement, Dr Elsie Inglis, had a wonderful personality. She showed great powers of initiative and organisation, with the power of inspiring others with her wonderful energy and enthusiasm. The great strain of work incurred by her devoted skill undermined her health, and she died, on her return to this country from Russia, in 1917. The following tribute paid to the Scottish Women's Hospitals, is excellent testimony to the personality of the Leader and the capacity of the University Graduates and others in charge. I quote from a letter of Colonel Hunter, A.M.S., O.C., of an R.A.M.C. unit in Serbia, sent out to deal with the raging typhus epidemic and famine fevers devastating the land:- 'No more lovable personality than hers, or more devoted and courageous body of women ever set out to help effectively a people in dire distress than the Scottish Women's Hospitals, which she organised, sent out, and afterwards took personal charge of in Serbia in 1915. Amidst the most trying conditions she, or they, never faltered in courage and endurance. Under her wise and gentle leadership, difficulties seemed only to stir to further endeavour, more extended work, and great endurance of hardship.' The full history of the work of the Scottish Women's Hospitals, when written, will furnish an interesting record of valuable work carried out by Dr Inglis and her Staff, many of whom were Edinburgh University Graduates. II. Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (W.A.A.C.) From the point of view of women generally, perhaps one of the most outstanding developments of the war was the formation of the various women's uniformed corps. The formation of a women's army represented an extraordinary change in the traditional sentiments of the army authorities. Until recently it was generally believed that it was quite impossible to bring women into the vicinity of the troops, except in the restricted sphere of nursing, and to a small extent cooking. In 1917 the increasing shortage of men led the Army Council to look into the possibility of substituting women for men in various

branches of activity behind the fighting line. At the request of the Army Council the writer proceeded to France and visited various camps at Vimereux, Boulogne, Etaples, Abbeville, Rouen, Calais, Dieppe, &c., and after consultation with the army authorities on the spot, commented favourably on the possibility of women being employed on a large scale on work which would free large numbers of men for the fighting line. The key note to an effective scheme lay in effective organisation and careful discipline under the control of women. The scheme was approved by the Army Council, and at their request the writer undertook the duties of Organiser and Chief Controller of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, better known as the W.A.A.C.'s, and was responsible for the organisation of women for service at home and abroad. The formation and organisation of the Women's Corps went on rapidly, the numbers increasing until there were over 30,000 women in khaki. Not a few of the regular army authorities maintained that it would be impossible to run a corps of women satisfactorily, partly on account of sex disabilities, and partly on account of difficulty in obtaining the necessary discipline. These fears proved groundless, and the development of the corps proceeded satisfactorily. An initial difficulty was the absence of tradition and lack of experience of discipline. These difficulties were satisfactorily overcome by the selection of capable administrative Staff. A large proportion of Scottish women were appointed to the senior posts, and in the selection of senior officers from the large number of women applicants we soon found the great value of a University training. It was remarkably gratifying to find how quickly the women of capacity made good in the numerous responsible posts for senior women officers that were established throughout the country. On the medical side, recruiting Medical Boards were established all over the country, and as President of the Boards, Miss Isabel Cameron, M.D. (Edin.), lent by the Local Government Board for a few months, was of great assistance. She rapidly got this section set on a proper footing, and in consultation with the R.A.M.C. authorities, drew up the standard of medical fitness. Dr Laura Sandeman, M.D. (Edin.), went out to France as Medical Controller of the Women's Corps, and the high standard of health maintained, in spite of trying conditions, was greatly due to her efficiency. The Medical Department of the W.A.A.C. was formed as an auxiliary to the R.A.M.C., and worked in the closest touch with that body. The work undertaken by the Women's Army was grouped in four broad divisions: - (1) Clerical; (2) Domestic; (3) Mechanical; and (4) Miscellaneous. Originally started for the supply of the French bases, where there was a demand for 10,000 women, the replacement later extended to all the home commands. The second in command of the corps, Dame Helen Gwynne Vaughan, was chief Controller in France. She was a London D.Sc. and Professor of Botany. The value of the women's work was quickly appreciated by the various commanding officers at home and abroad, the corps later receiving Royal recognition, being known as Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps (Q.M.A.A.C.). The best tribute to its value and success may be gauged by the extension of the movement to the Navy and the Air Force. At the request of the Admiralty the writer reported on the best method of substituting women for men in the various naval bases. This led to the formation of a women's corps in the Navy, known as the Women's Royal Naval Service (W.R.N.S.). Similar developments later took place in the Air Force. The present Chief Medical Director in the Air Force, Dr Leticia Fairfield, is an Edinburgh Graduate. In his speech in the McEwan Hall last year, Sir Douglas Haig, speaking of the O.T.C., referred to the great influence the University can extend on the habits and

ideas of a nation. This applied equally to women as to men.

APPENDIX 4

Edinburgh University Political and Ideological Debates October 1912-June 1919¹

DATE	SOCIETY	MOTION	FOR / AGAINST
18/10/12	Phil. Soc.	'That Self-Assertion is better than Self-Sacrifice'	
22/10/12	Diag. Soc.	'That the General Influence of Fiction at the Present Day is Injurious'	
23/10/12	Union	'The the Present Government is unworthy of the Confidence of the Country'	206 / 126
23/10/12	Germ. Soc.	'Der Kreig is der Vater Alles Guten.'	
23/10/12	Hist. Soc.	'That the Danish Conquest of England brought more lasting results than the Norman.'	
23/10/12	Dial. Soc.	'That the Public School provides the best possible System of Education.'	
25/10/12	Bord. Assoc.	'That without Love and War Poetry would be Impossible.'	
26/10/12	Caith. Assoc.	'That Science has done more for Humanity than Literature and Philosophy.'	Carried by large majority
26/10/12	D. and G. Soc.	'That it is no duty of the State to provide for the maintenance of its weaker members.'	
26/10/12	U. F. Church Soc.	'That Socialism is ethically unjustifiable'	Narrowly defeated
28/10/12	Econ. Soc.	'That a reconsideration of the Fiscal Policy is now called for.'	
29/10/12	Diag. Soc.	'That the Unionist Party is the True Liberal Party'	13 / 2
31/10/12	Dial. Soc.	'That Co-Partnership offers a better Solution of the Industrial Problem than Collectivism'	
31/10/12	Theol. Soc.	'That the Church should adopt a more militant attitude to the Drink Evil.'	Carried
1/10/12	Wom. Deb. Soc.	'That Knowledge is the antidote to Fear.'	
2/11/12	D. and G. Soc.	'That the Franchise be extended to women on the same Basis as to Men.'	16 / 11
2/11/12	Celt. Soc.	'That Highland Character has never been rightly portrayed in Fiction.'	
5/11/12	Phil. / Diag.	'That it is not by Armaments that Great	16 / 12

¹ Information taken from The Student and various society minutes.

DATE	SOCIETY	MOTION	FOR / AGAINST
	Socs.	Wars of the Future will be Averted.'	
5/11/12	Hist. Soc.	'That the Battle of Bannockburn made Scotland a Nation.'	
7/11/12	Dial. Soc.	'That Empire-Building is Brigandage.'	
7/11/12	Union	'That the Parliamentary Franchise be granted to Women.'	
8/11/12	Bord. Assoc.	'That the Influence of Modern Education is Detrimental to Character.'	
9/11/12	Jewish Soc.	'That the Jew be given every facility for Assimilation.'	
15/11/12	Phil. Soc.	Discussion: 'Military Service'	
16/11/12	Celt. Soc.	'That Chivalry is a Lost Art.'	
18/11/12	Econ. Soc.	Discussion: 'Indian Economic Problems.'	
19/11/12	Dial. / Diag. Socs.	'That the Integrity of the Turkish Empire in Europe should be Maintained.'	16 / 11
20/11/12	Fab. Soc. / Christ. Un.	'That Industrial Unrest is not good for the Community.'	
21/11/12	Union	'That the Land is the People's'	38 / 51
21/11/12	Theol. Soc.	Discussion: 'The Ethics of (a) Nietzsche; (b) Tolstoy'	
26/11/12	Diag. Soc.	'That Cabinet Responsibility tends towards Cabinet Autocracy.'	
30/11/12	Celt. Soc.	'Shall we disestablish the Church of Scotland?'	14 / 10
5/12/12	Dial. Soc.	'Motion of no confidence in the Government.'	Carried by 1 vote
6/12/12	Phil. Soc.	'Motion of no confidence in the Government.'	
6/12/12	Bord. Assoc.	'That the Militant Suffragettes have given Great Britain a lesson in Political Activity.'	
10/12/12	Diag. Soc.	'That the Demoralisation of the Present Day is due to its craze for Amusement.'	6 / 4
11/12/12	Hist. Soc.	'That Sentiment has played a Greater Part in History than Self-Interest'	
10/01/13	Wom. Deb. Soc.	'That we best Realise Ourselves by Self-Sacrifice.'	Defeated by 2 votes
23/01/13	Union (Inter with Cambridge Uni.)	'The King's Speech'	152 / 172
24/01/13	Bord. Assoc.	'That the Rise of the East is the Menace of the West.'	
24/01/13	Phil. Soc.	Discussion: 'Eugenics'	
25/01/13	Jewish Soc.	Essay: 'Judaism and Eugenics'	

DATE	SOCIETY	MOTION	FOR / AGAINST
25/01/13	Celt. Soc.	Essay: 'Animal Intelligence'	
25/01/13	D. and G. Soc.	'That the Church is the Horse-Leech of Nations.'	
27/01/13	Econ. Soc.	Essay: 'Socialism and Democracy.'	
28/01/13	Fab. Soc.	Lecture: 'Poverty and Crime'	
31/01/13	Wom. Deb. Soc.	'That the Success of Cause depends more on the Personality of its Leader than on its Inherent Justice.'	
3/02/13	Econ. Soc.	'That State Interference had Increased, is Increasing, and should be Diminished.'	
5/02/13	Union	'That this House Approves of the Unionist Policy of Tariff Reform.'	87 / 135
8/02/13	U.F. Church Soc. / D. and G. Soc.	'That the Fall of the Turkish Empire will not solve the Balkan Question.'	9 / 6
11/02/13	Diag. Soc.	'That Socialism is England's Hope.'	5 / 8
20/02/13	Dial. Soc.	'That the World exists for Exceptional People.'	
20/02/13	Union (joint with Tr.. Col., Dublin)	'The Re-introduction of the Home Rule [for Ireland] Bill.'	238 / 220
22/02/13	D. and G. Soc.	'That the Present Government is unworthy of the Confidence of the People.'	
24/02/13	Econ. Soc.	'That the State and public Institutions are manufacturing Paupers.'	
28/02/13	Diag. Soc.	'That the Monroe Doctrine is Unfair, and should be Abolished.'	9 / 5
4/03/13	Diag. Soc.	'That the Present Day Responsibility of the Individual constitutes a real danger to the State.'	
5/03/13	Hist. Soc.	'That the Invention of Gunpowder was of Greater Importance than the Invention of Printing.'	
23/10/13	Theol. Soc.	'That to be a Citizen the Law of Conscience is Superior to the State Law.'	
28/10/13	Diag. Soc.	'That Britain should grant to India Self-Government on the Colonial Model.'	7 / 10
29/10/13	Dial. Soc.	Inaugural Address (Marquis of Linlithgow): 'War'	
30/10/13	Union	'That the Government is unworthy of the confidence of the country'	118 / 109
31/10/13	Wom. Deb. Soc.	'That Modern Psychical Research has been a Failure.'	
1/11/13	Celt. Soc.	'That Celtic Superstition is founded on	

DATE	SOCIETY	MOTION	FOR / AGAINST
		Fact.'	
1/11/13	D. and G. Soc.	'That it is the duty of the State to maintain a Dramatic Censor.'	
6/11/13	Theol. Soc.	Discussion: a) 'Christian Science'; b) 'Spiritualism'.	
6/11/13	Dial. Soc.	'That Eugenics is a Practical Science.'	Carried
8/11/13	U.F. Ch. Soc.	'That Great Men make the Times, not Times Great Men.'	
10/11/13	Celt. / D. and G. Socs.	'That Ulster is justified in her resistance.'	Carried
13/11/13	Dial. Soc.	'That the Disinterested Management of Public Houses is Inimical the Social Welfare of the People.'	
14/11/13	Wom. Deb. Soc.	'That we owe our Faiths, Religious and Political, to Fanatics.'	
15/11/13	Celt. Soc.	'That the Statesman is the Guide and not the Interpreter of public Opinion.'	Defeated by 2 votes
15/11/13	D. and G. Soc.	'That Women are Naturally Conservative.'	Narrowly defeated
15/11/13	Jewish Soc.	'That Hebrew be the Jewish National Language.'	
18/11/13	Diag. Soc.	'That it is the Function of a Government to Give Effect to the Will of a Majority of the 'People'.'	12 / 13
19/11/13	Christ. Un. / Fab. Soc.	'That Social Environment, not Character, is the Condition of Conditions'	
20/11/13	Dial. / Diag. Socs.	'That Trade follows the Flag.'	
20/11/13	Theol. Soc.	'The Church and Socialism.'	
21/11/13	Phil. Soc.	Discussion: 'Sweated Labour'	
22/11/13	Caith. Assoc.	'That True Self-Development implies Self-Sacrifice.'	Carried
22/11/13	U.F. Ch. Soc.	'That the Scientific Mind has done more for Humanity than the Philosophic.'	
25/11/13	Diag. Soc.	'That the Time is now Ripe for the Establishment of an Imperial Parliament with Colonial Representation.'	7 / 6
27/11/13	Dial. Soc.	'The Old Order Changeth.'	
29/11/13	Celt. Soc.	'That the Nation is too much Spoon-Fed.'	
29/11/13	D. and G. Soc.	'That Science warrants a Belief in Spiritualism.'	
2/12/13	Econ. Soc.	'The Servile State.'	
4/12/13	Dial. Soc.	'That the Present Government is unworthy of the Confidence of the Nation.'	Overwhelming

DATE	SOCIETY	MOTION	FOR / AGAINST
			defeat
5/12/13	Phil. Soc.	Essay: 'Mysticism'	
6/12/13	D. and G. Soc.	'That the strength of Liberalism is not based on the principles of Democracy.'	
9/12/13	Fab. Soc.	Essay: 'The Party System and Labour.'	
10/12/13	Union (Inter, with St. Andrews)	King's Speech	193 / 156
13/12/13	Celt. Soc.	'That the Dreamer Rules the World.'	
15/12/13	Econ. Soc.	'That Taxation ought to be based on Expenditure, not Expenditure on Taxation.'	
16/12/13	Diag. Soc.	'That in times of war absolute liberty should be granted to the Press.'	5 / 9
17/12/13	Fab. Soc.	Address (Hilaire Belloc): 'The Servile State.'	
13/01/14	Diag. Soc.	'That the Present Government is Unworthy of the Confidence of the Country.'	13 / 10
14/01/14	Associated Socs.	'Women's Suffrage'	15 / 14
16/01/14	Bord. Assoc.	'That War is Fundamentally Wrong'	
17/01/14	Union (Norman Angell debate)	'That Military Power is Socially and Economically Futile'	126 / 88
17/01/14	Celt. Soc.	'That the Celtic Element in the Scottish Character is stronger than the Saxon.'	Carried by casting vote
20/01/14	Diag. Soc.	'That Immigration of Aliens into the British Islands Should be Restricted.'	5 / 6
23/01/14	Phil. Soc.	'That the Remedy for the present Social Unrest is a Higher Education of the People.'	10 / 12
24/01/14	D. and G. Soc.	'That the Influence of the Church is Decadent.'	
29/01/14	Theol. Soc.	'That the Scottish Conception of the Sabbath is not Warranted by the Teaching of Jesus.'	
30/01/14	Wom. Deb. Soc.	Discussion: 'The Economic Position of Women.'	
30/01/14	Fab. Soc.	'Greater Unionism'	
31/01/14	U. F. Church Soc.	'That the Higher Education of Women is Undesirable.'	
31/01/14	Jewish Soc.	'That the Immigration of Jews into a Country is beneficial to the Country's interests.'	
3/02/14	Diag. Soc.	'That Government be Party is Injurious to a nation's Interests.'	12 / 23

DATE	SOCIETY	MOTION	FOR / AGAINST
5/02/14	Union (Inter, with Glasgow Uni.)	‘Home Rule for Ireland’	108 / 93
5/02/14	Theol. Soc.	‘The Respective Merits and Demerits of Protestantism and Roman Catholicism.’	
7/02/14	Caith. Assoc.	‘That the Franchise be Extended to Women on the same Basis as to Men.’	
9/02/14	Econ. Soc.	Discussion: ‘Economics of Imperialism.’	
12/02/14	Christian Union	Address: ‘What’s the Good of Religion.’	
12/02/14	Dial. Soc.	‘That Telepathy is a Recognised Fact in Modern Experience.’	
13/02/14	U.F. Church Soc.	‘That the Suffragists are going the Right Way about it.’	
13/02/14	Phil. Soc.	‘Armaments and Arbitration.’	
13/02/14	D. and G. Soc.	‘That in Science alone lies the Hope of the Future.’	
13/02/14	Jewish Soc.	Address: ‘Anti-Semitism’	
17/02/14	Diag. Soc.	‘That it is the Duty of the Statesman to Guide rather than to Interpret Public Opinion.’	4 / 7
19/02/14	Dial. Soc.	‘That an Organic British Empire is impossible.’	
21/02/14	D. and G. Soc.	‘That the Present Government is Unworthy of the Confidence of the People.’	
27/02/14	Phil. Soc.	Discussion: ‘Nietzsche’	
28/02/14	Jewish Soc.	Discussion: ‘That then idea of Woman’s Enfranchisement is not foreign to Judaism.’	
3/03/14	Union	‘That War is a Pastime played at the Expense of the Poor for the Benefit of the Rich.’	
7/03/14	Caith. Assoc.	‘That the State Care of the Child is detrimental to the Nation.’	
7/03/14	U.F. Church Soc.	‘That Civilisation has made Commerce, and not Commerce Civilisation.’	
29/04/14	Hist. Soc.	‘That Britain does not love Coalitions.’	
6/05/14	Summer Deb. Soc.	‘Better like Hector in the field to die, than like the perfumed Paris turn and fly.’	
27/10/14	Diag. Soc.	‘That Military Education should be Compulsory in Britain.’	7 / 8
17/11/14	Diag. Soc.	‘That it is Inadvisable that Turkey should Lose its Place in Europe.’	7 / 11
15/12/14	Diag. Soc.	‘That Modern Politics Show a Marked Tendency towards Machiavellianism.’	3 / 9

DATE	SOCIETY	MOTION	FOR / AGAINST
12/01/15	Diag. Soc.	'That the Claims of Democracies can Best be Realised under an Oligarchic Form of Government.'	Carried by one vote
21/01/15	Dial. Soc.	'That the Interests of the United States are Antagonistic to those of Britain.'	6 / 4
21/01/15	Dial. Soc.	'That the University Education of Women is Undesirable.'	5 / 4
28/01/15	Dial. Soc.	'That Results Justify Experiments on Animals'	Casting vote in favour
2/03/15	Diag. Soc.	'That the Little Nations shall Lead Them.'	2 / 5
9/03/15	Diag. Soc.	Address: 'Sea Power.'	
2/11/15	Diag. Soc.	'That Nationalism should not be Sacrificed on the Altar of Cosmopolitanism.'	4 / 3
16/11/15	Diag. Soc.	'That the Union of the Anglo-Saxon People against the World is both Probable and Desirable.'	
11/05/16	Eng. Lit. / Hist. Socs.	'That Life Paralyses Literature'	Large majority in negative
8/02/19	Celt. Soc.	'The next great War will be Capitalism v. Labour.'	
13/02/19	Dial. Soc.	'That a League of Nations is impracticable at the present stage of civilisation.'	3 / 11
29/01/19	Celt. Soc.	Address: 'Celtic Influence in Scotland.'	
29/01/19	Hist. Soc.	Discussion: 'Proportional Representation.'	
30/01/19	Women's Christ. Un.	Discussion: 'Students and Social Reconstruction'	
17/02/19	Christ. Un.	'Christianity and India'	
14/02/19	Ch. of Scot. Soc.	'Abolition of War is an Ideal which is Impossible of Attainment.'	
14/02/19	Wom. Deb. Soc.	Discussion: 'Faith-healing and Suggestion.'	
26/02/19	Hist. Soc.	'That Statesmanship should be judged by Motives rather than by Results.'	
8/03/19	Caith. Assoc.	Essay: 'Spiritualism.'	
3/05/19	Phil. Soc.	Discussion: 'Whether an advocate is justified in defending a man of whose guilt he is personally convinced'	
27/05/19	Fab. Soc.	Address (Mr. Rees, Economic Hist. Lecturer): 'Reconstruction'	

KEY

Bord. Assoc.	-	Borderers Association
Caith. Assoc.	-	Caithness Association
Celt. Soc.	-	Celtic Society
Ch. of Scot. Soc.	-	Church of Scotland Society
D. and G. Soc.	-	Dumfries and Galloway Society
Diag. Soc.	-	Diagnostic Society
Dial. Soc.	-	Dialectic Society
Econ. Soc.	-	Economics Society
Fab. Soc.	-	Fabian Society
Hist. Soc.	-	History Society
Phil. Soc.	-	Philomathic Society
Theol. Soc.	-	Theological Society
U. F. Church Soc.	-	United Free Church Society
Wom. Deb. Soc.	-	Women's Debating Society

APPENDIX 5

University Statistics 1911-1920

Number of Undergraduates and University Income 1911-1920¹

Year	Total number of Students	Total Income (£)	Parliamentary Grant (£)	Treasury Grant (£)	Total state grant as a percentage of income
1911-12	3419	65,827	15,120	8,434	35%
1912-13	3352	104,548	15,070	9,192	23%
1913-14	3282	70,475	15,120	14,175	56%
1914-15	2415	75,916	15,120	15,735	41%
1915-16	1811	109,182	15,070	12,698	25%
1916-17	1887	54,956	15,120	12,525	50%
1917-18	2083	120,251	15,070	12,566	23%
1918-19	3554	63,224	15,120	12,566	43%
1919-20	4643	117,830	15,070	25,190	23%

¹ The University of Edinburgh Library, Special Collections, The University of Edinburgh Calendar, various dates 1911-1920; Returns from Universities and University Colleges In Receipt of Treasury Grant 1922-23 London: HMSO, 1924; and Dawson, W.H., The Yearbook of the Universities of the British Empire 1918-1920 London: G. Bell and Sons, 1920

APPENDIX 6

Edinburgh University Political and Ideological Debates 1919-1929

DATES	SOCIETY	MOTION	FOR / AGAINST
13/02/19	Dial. Soc.	'That a League of Nations is impracticable at the present stage of civilisation.'	3 / 11
29/01/19	Celt. Soc.	Address: 'Celtic Influence in Scotland.'	
17/02/19	Christ. Un.	'Christianity and India'	
14/02/19	Ch. of Scot. Soc.	'Abolition of War is an Ideal which is Impossible of Attainment.'	
26/02/19	Hist. Soc.	'That Statesmanship should be judged by Motives rather than by Results.'	
23/10/19	Dial. Soc.	'That Democracy involves the Triumph of the Incompetent.'	5 / 7
4/11/19	Diag. Soc.	'That Private Ownership is Superior to Nationalisation.'	11 / 8
12/11/19	Hist. Soc.	'That India is Ripe for Self-Government'	
13/11/19	Union	'That the Present Government has the confidence of this House.'	37 / 32
20/11/19	Dial. Soc.	'That the world owes more to its Thinkers than it does its Men of Action.'	11 / 12
25/11/19	Diag. Soc.	'That Spiritualism is Religion in its Dotage.'	12 / 8
2/12/19	D. and G. Soc.	'That the Press is the ruin of modern life.'	6 / 32
6/12/19	Celt. Soc.	'That the Ideals of Western Civilisation can never be Realised among Eastern Races.'	13 / 12
6/12/19	D. and G. Soc.	'That Nationalisation is the Best Remedy for Social Unrest.'	8 / 34
8/01/20	Dial. Soc.	'That the Human Race Exists for the sake of the Few.'	3 / 4
15/01/20	Union	'That the Time is Now Ripe for the Introduction of State Medical Service.'	8 / 46
15/01/20	Dial. Soc.	'That State Control is more Desirable than Private Enterprise'.	5 / 7
26/01/20	Assoc. Socs.	'That the Time has now Come to introduce a Measure of Home Rule for Scotland.'	30 / 8
5/02/20	Dial. Soc.	'That the Time has now come to introduce a measure of Home Rule for Scotland'	Carried by large majority
10/02/20	Econ. Soc.	'That the Nationalisation of Mines would be an Economic Disaster.'	Carried by large majority

10/02/20	Diag. Soc.	‘That Strikes be Declared Illegal.’	9 / 8
22/02/20	D. and G. Soc.	‘That Prohibition would be the Ruination of this Country.’	15 / 26
26/02/20	Dial. Soc.	‘That the Government has not the confidence of the People.’	6 / 8
21/10/20	Dial. Soc.	‘That the application of Democratic Methods to Foreign Policy is impracticable.’	12 / 11
26/10/20	Diag. Soc.	‘That the War to End War has been Followed by the Peace to end Peace’	6 / 10
28/02/20	Celt. Soc.	‘That the Materialistic Tendency of Modern Education is Detrimental to the Morality of the Nation.’	
28/02/20	D. and G. Soc.	‘That the Present Government is Unworthy of the Confidence of the People’	10 / 19
2/11/20	Diag. Soc.	‘That the Anglicisation of Scotland is Proving Fatal to our National Virtues.’	8 / 12
4/11/20	Dial. Soc.	‘That this House believes in the manifestations of departed spirits.’	10 / 12
13/11/20	D. and G. Soc.	‘Monogamy is an Outworn Superstition.’	7 / 51
16/11/20	D. and G. Soc.	‘World’s Politics and the Kingdom of God.’	
18/11/20	Union	‘That the Present Government is Unworthy of the Confidence of the Country.’	
20/11/20	Celt. / D. and G. Soc.	‘Is Labour Fit to Govern?’	19 / 54
20/11/20	Econ. / Hist. / Fab. Socs.	‘Dominion Home Rule is the Best Solution of the Irish Problem’	Defeated by 13 votes
23/11/20	Diag. Soc.	‘That a Return to Party Politics is Desirable.’	16 / 13
26/11/20	Phil. Soc.	‘That the Most Retrograde Political Development of the Twentieth Century is the Communal Experiment in Russia.’	Carried by narrow margin
27/11/20	Celt. Soc.	‘The Ottoman Government be Expelled from Europe.’	Defeated
2/12/20	Dial. Soc.	‘That the Leadership of the World is passing from Great Britain to the U.S.A.’	7 / 10
13/01/21	Dial. Soc.	‘That Patriotism is an Inseparable Obstacle to International Peace’	6 / 4
25/01/21	Union (Inter with Glasg. Uni.)	‘Motion of no-confidence in Government’	38 / 55
25/01/21	Assoc. Socs.	‘That the Strike is a Legitimate Weapon in Industrial Warfare.’	Defeated by 1 vote
31/01/21	Econ. Soc.	‘That Economic Power Precedes and	

		Determines Political Power.'	
8/02/21	Dial. Soc.	'That the Influence of the Modern Press is Detrimental.'	
10/02/21	Dial. Soc.	'That Labour is Unfit to Govern.'	10 / 4
12/02/21	Celt. Soc	'That Celticism is a Drag on the Development of the Highlands.'	
14/02/21	Econ. Soc.	'That the War and its Aftermath have Killed Britain's Free Trade Policy.'	
15/02/21	Diag. Soc.	'That the Admission of Women to the Professions is Unwise.'	
16/02/21	Hist. Soc.	'That British Naval Superiority is the Surest Safeguard of the Freedom of the Seas.'	
17/02/21	Dial. Soc.	'That Labour is Unfit to Govern.'	
19/02/21	U.F. Church Soc.	'That the Higher Education of Women is Undesirable.'	
25/02/21	Caith. Assoc.	'That the Higher Education of Women is Undesirable'	
25/02/21	Dial. Soc.	'That Education which Seeks to Open Men's Eyes to Evil, Leads them to Commit it.'	
26/02/21	D. and G. Soc.	'That the Present Government is Unworthy of the Confidence of the People.'	
1/03/21	Dig. / Hist. Socs.	'That the Trend of Modern Education is Proving Detrimental to the True Interests of the Nation.'	
2/03/21	Angus Soc.	'That Spiritualism is the Religion of the Future.'	
5/03/21	U.F. Church Soc.	'That Free Education Should be Abolished.'	
10/03/21	Dial. Soc.	'That the Government has Not the Confidence of this House.'	
16/03/21	Hist. Soc.	'That Character is Stronger than Environment.'	
21/05/21	Caith. Assoc.	'That the Teacher has more Influence in the Moulding of Character than the Minister.'	
8/06/21	Hist. Soc.	'That the Church has lost its hold on the People.'	
20/10/21	Union	'That the Labour Policy of the Government stands condemned.'	77 / 81
25/10/21	Diag. Soc.	'That the Church has Lost its Hold on the Mass of the People.'	18 / 8
1/11/21	Diag. Soc.	'That the League of Nations in its Present Form can have no Appreciable Effect on World Politics.'	7 / 8
2/11/21	Union	'That Western Civilisation has Failed.'	26 / 52
12/11/21	Caith. Assoc.	That Patriotism is an Insuperable Obstacle to International Peace.'	

17/11/21	Inter-Union with Durham Uni.	‘That there is no Escape from the Burden of Armaments.’	32 / 57
24/11/21	Diag. / Dial. Soc.	That too little stress has been laid on the Principle of Self-Determination.’	15 / 7
24/11/21	Wom. Deb. Soc.	‘That the Women of the Present Generation are Not Sufficiently Public Spirited.’	
28/11/21	Econ. Soc.	‘That Great Britain has Irretrievably Lost Her Industrial and Commercial Supremacy.’	
29/11/21	Diag. Soc.	‘That Trial by Jury be Abolished.’	
30/11/21	Dial. Soc.	‘That History confirms the belief in moral progress.’	9 / 2
14/12/21	Hist. Soc.	‘That the Eastern Sun is Rising Over the Western Mountains.’	
12/01/22	Dial. Soc.	‘That a belief in a future life is essential to the proper conduct of this one.’	6 / 5
26/01/21	Union (Women’s)	‘That the Idea of Empire must be superseded by the Idea of a Commonwealth of Nations.’	Carried by majority of 9
1/02/22	Union	‘That this House Deplores the Admission of Women to the Learned Professions.’	41 / 18
3/02/22	Wom. Deb. Soc.	‘That the Moral Character of the Race will Improve as Marriage Ceases to be an Economic Necessity for Women.’	
8/02/22	Hist. Soc.	‘That History Justifies a Belief in Moral Progress.’	
11/02/22	Celt. Soc.	‘That Capitalism is Incompatible with Christianity’	
14/02/22	Diag. Soc.	‘That Home Rule be Granted to Scotland.’	
22/02/22	Hist. Soc.	‘That the Idea of the League of Nations is Premature.’	
22/02/22	Dial. Soc.	‘That the Visionary is the Greatest Force in Practical Politics.’	
23/02/22	Union (Inter, with Trinity College, Dublin)	‘That in the Opinion of this House the Party System of Government should be Revived.’	
25/02/22	U. F. Church Soc.	‘That a Teacher had More Influence on Character than a Clergyman.’	
1/05/22	Union (Women’s)	‘That there is More Scope for the Average Woman in the Teaching than in the Medical Profession.’	Carried by majority of 23
29/05/22	E.U. League of Nations	‘That the Cancellation of Reparations and War Debts would be Economically	

	Union	Advantageous.'	
26/06/22	Union (Inter with New York Uni.)	'That a General Cancellation of Inter Allied War Debts is Necessary to a Peaceful World Settlement.'	92 / 20
31/10/22	Diag. Soc.	'That Decline in Militarism involves the Decadence of the People'	8 / 9
4/11/22	Celt. Soc.	'That of all nationalities the Scottish is the most Unpatriotic.'	11 / 12
11/11/22	D. and G. Soc.	'That it is More Desirable to have Close Relations with France than with America.'	
11/11/22	Caith. Assoc.	'That this House Believes in Spiritualism'	Defeated by small majority
11/11/22	Phil. Soc.	'That the Scot has Contributed Nothing to the Progress of Humanity'	Defeated by 1 vote
13/11/22	Econ. / Hist. / E.U. League of Nations Un.	'That the League of Nations will mean Party Politics on a World Scale.'	19 / 31
13/11/22	Ag. / Biol. Socs.	'That Man is Nature's Greatest Mistake.'	Defeated
1/12/22	Union (Inter with Indian Assoc.)	'That the policy of non-co-operation is the best political weapon for India at the present time.'	Carried by 34 votes
5/12/22	Diag. Soc.	'That Vivisection is Justifiable in the Interests of Science.'	10 / 7
6/01/23	Diag. Soc.	'That the Character of a Man should not Influence our Opinion of his Work'	11 / 6
25/01/23	Union	'That His Majesty's Government has not the Confidence of this House.'	22 / 27
27/01/23	Assoc. Soc.	'That France's attitude in the Reparations Question is economically unsound.'	24 / 13
30/01/23	Diag. Soc.	1923 'That the Government has the Confidence of this House'	8 / 7
13/02/23	Diag. Soc.	'That the Moral Worth and Aims of the Covenanters have been grossly exaggerated'	7 / 8
17/02/23	Celt. Soc.	'That this House disapproves of the attitude of the Government towards the question of Unemployment'	7 / 9
27/02/23	Diag. Soc.	'That in much Wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth Knowledge increaseth Sorrow'	3 / 8
11/05/23	Union (Inter with Glasgow Uni.)	'That the Present French Policy on the Ruhr is Justifiable.'	Defeated by 10 votes

18/10/23	Dial. Soc.	‘That the Elizabethan and Victorian Ages Are the Twin Peaks in Which English Civilization Culminated.’	2 / 4
23/10/23	Diag. Soc.	‘That Christianity has Forsaken its Founder’	5 / 8
30/10/23	Diag. Soc.	‘That Modern Inventions place a Premium upon Idleness’	5 / 12
3/11/23	Celt. Soc.	‘That the Crofter is not so good a citizen as the miner’	Defeated by 1 vote
15/11/23	Union (Women’s)	‘That the League of Nations has Failed.’	6 / 12
23/11/23	Dial. Soc.	‘That Bigotry is Essential to Worldly Success.’	5 / 7
24/11/23	Celt. Soc.	‘That Modern Civilization is on the Verge of Collapse’	Defeated by small majority
27/11/23	Diag. Soc.	‘That the Scientific Creation of Life is not a Desirable Ideal’	7 / 8
1/12/23	Celt. Soc.	‘That there is no conflict between scientific knowledge and religious belief’	Carried by single vote
13/12/23	Dial. Soc.	‘That the League of Nations has been a Failure.	6 / 4
9/01/24	Diag. Soc.	‘That a Slavish adherence to Creed is a Barrier to Progress’	9 / 4
10/01/24	Dial. Soc.	‘That in the opinion of this House the broad-mindedness of the Age is tending to the laxity of morals.	7 / 4
13/01/24	Celt. Soc.	‘That the Rector should be elected on a non-political basis.’	10 / 7
15/01/24	Diag. Soc.	‘That between States, Might is Right’	3 / 12
23/01/24	Union	‘That there is now no Need of a Liberal Party in British Politics.’	
29/01/24	Diag. Soc.	‘That the present Government has the Confidence of this House’	10 / 8
6/02/24	Union	‘That French Policy is Leading Straight to War.’	26 / 10
9/02/24	Celt. Soc.	‘That the land question is more important than the language question in the Highlands.’	9 / 5
16/02/24	Celt. Soc.	‘That the Failure of the ‘45 was the Salvation of the Gael.’	5 / 9
19/02/24	Diag. Soc.	‘That the Advantages of a Debating Society outweigh its Disadvantages’	7 / 6
20/02/24	Inter-Union with Dublin and Durham Uni.	‘That the Present Government had not the Confidence of this House.’	42 / 57

21/02/24	Dial. Soc.	‘That this House has no confidence in His Majesty’s Government.	5 / 4
15/10/24	Union	‘That the Present Government Should be Returned to Power’	24 / 91
16/10/24	Union	‘That Socialism is a Moral and Economic Necessity for Britain’	
25/10/24	Celt. Soc.	‘That Ulster has the Sympathy of this House in its recent actions’	Carried by one vote
26/10/24	Diag. Soc.	‘That all men are equal’	3 / 5
28/10/24	Diag. Soc.	‘That the Introduction of some form of Liturgy is desirable in the Presbyterian Church’	7 / 6
29/10/24	Union	‘That the Medical Profession is Unworthy of the Confidence it Receives’	
4/11/24	Diag. Soc.	‘That Educated Woman is the Chief Affliction of the 20th Century’	13 / 3
12/11/24	Inter-Union with Cambridge University	‘That Socialism is a Moral and Economic Necessity for Britain’	38 / 50
22/11/24	Celt. Soc.	‘That it will be found an unjust and unwise jealousy to deprive a man of his National Liberty upon the supposition that he may misuse it.’	16 / 17
26/11/24	Union	‘That a Policy of Birth Control is in the Best Interest of the Race.’	71 / 61
27/11/24	Dial. Soc.	‘That the Environment is the Dominant Influence in the Formation of the Character.’	10 / 5
27/11/24	Women’s Union	‘That a University Education is not Woman’s Best Preparation for Life.’	Carried by majority of 5
29/11/24	Celt. Soc.	‘That Moral and Material Progress are in Opposition.’	17 / 28
2/12/24	Diag. Soc.	‘That an Immediate Return to the Gold Standard is Necessary’	6 / 13
9/12/24	Diag. Soc.	‘That Convention is the Refuge of the Weak-minded’	7 / 6
13/01/25	Diag. Soc.	‘That Ennobling Thoughts Depart when Men change Swords for Ledgers’	3 / 7
14/01/25	Union	‘That Capital Punishment should be Abolished’	
24/01/25	Celt. Soc.	‘That the British Empire stands in the way of the establishment of international good-will.’	4 / 6
28/01/25	Inter-Union with	‘A Scottish Parliament in Session to Consider a Bill to make Glasgow the	10 / 23

	Glasgow University	Capital of Scotland.'	
31/01/25	Celt. Soc.	'That belief in the Immortality of the soul has no foundation save in man's conceit'	4 / 10
3/02/25	Diag. Soc.	'That the Present Government has the Confidence of this House'	10 / 6
10/02/25	Diag. Soc.	'That a Policy of Birth Control is essential for Britain'	4 / 9
11/02/25	Union	'That the Sermon on the Mount can be applied to Politics.'	23 / 3
12/02/25	Dial. Soc.	'That His Majesty's Government has the Confidence of this House.'	4 / 7
14/02/25	Celt. Soc.	'That Christianity and Socialism are Incompatible.'	6 / 14
24/02/25	Diag. Soc.	'That a despotic Monarchy is most favourable to the well-being of a nation'	5 / 6
25/02/25	Union	'That the Continued Existence of the House of Lords is an Insult to the Intelligence of the Nation.'	
24/10/25	Celt. Soc.	'That the Celt is Incapable of Sustained Effort.'	4 / 16
27/10/25	Diag. Soc.	'That a state supported Church is undesirable'	14 / 4
28/10/25	Union	'That His Majesty's Government had not the Confidence of the House.'	62 / 68
29/10/25	Dial. Soc.	'That Enthusiasm is more necessary for success than genius.'	7 / 5
31/10/25	Celt. Soc.	'That the Nationalisation of the Land would benefit the Highlands economically.'	12 / 6
2/11/25	Diag. Soc.	'That Imperialism has more possibilities for Good than Internationalism'	7 / 11
5/11/25	Dial. Soc.	'That Christianity will be found wanting when put to the touchstone of the colour problem.'	6 / 13
12/11/25	Dial. Soc.	'That Scotland is losing her National characteristics.'	8 / 10
17/11/25	Diag. Soc.	'That the Modern World has Mistaken Comfort and Civilization'	10 / 7
19/11/25	Dial. Soc.	'That Utility is Morality.'	Carried
21/11/25	Inter Debate between Celt. and D. and G. Socs.	'That the Modern World has Mistaken Comfort for Civilisation'	33 / 22
25/11/25	Union	'That this House Disapproves of Vivisection.'	3 / 35
28/11/25	Celt. Soc.	'That the Artificial Fostering of the Language of the Gael as is being done in	9 / 14

		Ireland is both Foolish and Useless.'	
14/12/25	Dial. Soc.	'The Weapon of the Advocate is the sword of the soldier not the dagger of the assassin.'	7 / 6
16/12/25	Celt. Soc.	'That the Clan System and Sentiment cannot exist in a Modern State.'	10 / 12
12/01/26	Diag. Soc.	'That the History of a Nation is the History of its Great Men'	7 / 4
20/01/26	Union	'Women Were and Are an Academic Nuisance.'	23 / 19
2/02/26	Doiag. Soc.	'That His Majesty's Government has the Confidence of this House'	11 / 6
18/02/26	Dial. Soc.	'That conscience is no valid excuse for contravention of the law.'	8 / 15
28/10/26	Dial. Soc.	'That Industrial Problems may be solved rather by the study of the mind than by Economics.'	5 / 7
2/11/26	Diag. Soc.	'That the Theory of Reincarnation is worthy of our acceptance'	10 / 5
24/11/26	Union	'That the Principle of Non-political Rectorial Elections should be Universally Adopted by the Scottish Universities.'	27 / 22
25/11/26	Inter Debate between Dial. And Diag. Socs.	'That Dr Nansen's Theory of the Degeneracy of the Human Race is Unsound.'	10 / 6
30/11/26	Doiag. Soc.	'That this House approves of the League of Nations'	12 / 4
9/11/26	Dial. Soc.	'That the modern civilised world is progressing rather towards Despotism rather than Democracy.'	5 / 4
18/01/27	Diag. Soc.	'That the Glory of the British Empire is on the Wane'	7 / 8
1/02/27	Diag. Soc.	'That His Majesty's Government has the Confidence of the House'	3 / 11
9/02/27	Union	'That Physical Exercise, with Medical Examination, should be Compulsory in the University.'	31 / 15
14/02/27	Celt. Soc.	'That English sports and pastimes are more calculated to develop Christian characteristics than Highland games and athletics.'	6 / 11
17/02/27	Dial. Soc.	'That genius robbed of morality deserves not fame.'	7 / 6
1/03/27	Diag. Soc.	'That Conscience is a Selfish Instinct'	4 / 5
02/03/27	Inter-Union with Trinity	'That Migration Between the Nations of the British Isles should be Controlled.'	2 / 14

	College, Dublin, and Glasgow University		
22/10/27	Celt. Soc.	‘That the Church is more influential than the Press.’	17 / 7
29/10/27	Celt. Soc.	‘That Sentiment and Patriotism are Incompatible with World Peace.’	9 / 11
8/11/27	Diag. Soc.	‘That Home Rule would be Beneficial to Scotland’	5 / 4
9/11/27	Union	‘That His Majesty’s Government has not the Confidence of this House.’	29 / 35
10/11/27	Dial. Soc.	‘That the sprit of tolerance will in the end prove fatal to the British Empire.’	3 / 6
26/11/27	Celt. Soc.	‘That all round Disarmament is the only possible method of bringing about International Peace.’	6 / 14
6/12/27	Diag. Soc.	‘That the Conflict between Science and Religion is at an End’	6 / 4
14/01/28	Celt. Soc.	‘That the benefits alleged to be due to the Reformation have been greatly overestimated.’	8 / 6
17/01/28	Diag. Soc.	‘That Men do no attain to Truth through Reason’	5 / 8
19/01/28	Dial. Soc.	‘That His Majesty’s Government has not the confidence of this House.’	7 / 3
28/01/28	Associated Societies	‘The Family and the Nation are the Chief Foes to Progress.’	Rejected by a large majority
7/02/28	Inter-Union with University of Oregon	‘That the Prohibition of Excisable Liquor is Impracticable.’	53 / 40
14/02/28	Diag. Soc.	‘The Ideal of World Disarmament is Unrealisable’	4 / 7
26/10/28	Dial. Soc.	‘That civilisation is based on human selfishness.’	3 / 7
29/10/28	Diag. Soc.	‘That a Moral System is Possible without Religion’	13 / 12
1/11/28	Dial. Soc.	‘That the efforts of the Dominions to remain purely Anglo-Saxon are as undesirable as the are futile.’	10 / 4
3/11/28	Inter Debate between Celt. And D. and G. Socs.	‘That Man is Nature’s Greatest Mistake.’	17 / 47
7/11/28	Inter-Union	‘That this House Deplores the Influence of	54 / 62

	with Canadian Universities Debating Team	Lead Soldiers on the Young.'	
8/11/28	Dial. Soc.	'That the Church is the chief barrier between man and God.'	7 / 11
5/12/28	Union	'That His Majesty's Government has not the confidence of this House.'	33 / 37
10/01/29	Dial. Soc.	'That in Eugenics lies the one hope of social reform.'	2 / 12
12/01/29	Celt. Soc.	'That Polygamy is morally justifiable.'	5 / 17
31/01/29	Dial. Soc.	'That the rational man must be an agnostic'	8 / 16
2/02/29	Celt. Soc.	'That the Clan System was the best form of the organisation of Human Society.'	12 / 8
12/02/29	Union	'That this House approves of Birth Control'	57 / 23
16/02/29	Celt. Soc.	'That the influx of tourists has destroyed the Celtic Spirit of the Western Isles.'	17 / 24
19/10/29	Celt. Soc.	'That the Volatile Celt is the most Conservative of Beings'	4 / 13
31/10/29	Dial. Soc.	'That slums, due to the poverty of character rather than lack of wealth, will never be swept away by the provision of better wages and houses.'	9 / 11
3/11/29	Celt. Soc.	'That Emigration has drained the Life-blood of the Highlands'	Defeated
7/11/29	Dial. Soc.	'That Modernism is a perversion of Christianity.'	7 / 10
14/11/29	Dial. Soc.	'That Self-Government is not desirable for India.'	8 / 7
19/11/29	Dial. Soc.	'That in Western Industrial Civilisation lies the hope of human progress.'	Carried
21/11/29	Dial. Soc.	'That for the intelligent man the thought of Eternal Life is more appalling than the thought of Death.'	6 / 9
22/11/29	Union	'That the O.T.C.'s of the British Universities are detrimental to the interests of World Peace.'	24 / 32

KEY

Bord. Assoc.	-	Borderers Association
Caith. Assoc.	-	Caithness Association
Celt. Soc.	-	Celtic Society
Ch. of Scot. Soc.	-	Church of Scotland Society
D. and G. Soc.	-	Dumfries and Galloway Society

Diag. Soc	-	Diagnostic Society
Dial. Soc.	-	Dialectic Society
Econ. Soc.	-	Economics Society
Fab. Soc.	-	Fabian Society
Hist. Soc.	-	History Society
Phil. Soc.	-	Philomathic Society
Theol. Soc.	-	Theological Society
U. F. Church Soc.	-	United Free Church Society
Wom. Deb. Soc.	-	Women's Debating Society

APPENDIX 7

Report of the Committee on Educational Policy on Remit from the Senatus to Consider and Report upon the Recommendations of a Special Committee of the University Court on Athletics. June 1927.

The Committee have carefully considered the Report of the Special Committee of the Court, and in particular the following summary of recommendations forming the last paragraph of the Report:- (1) That a Director of Physical Training should be appointed for the purpose of organising and developing athletic activities and physical culture generally among the students....(3) That forms should be provided to be filled up when students first matriculate, and that systematic efforts should be made by addresses to the junior classes, personal interviews, and otherwise, to induce and encourage all students to take a reasonable amount of regular physical exercise, either by playing games or in some other form....(5) That Wednesday afternoons from 1 o'clock onwards should be free of class work of any kind so far as is practically possible; that no class work of any kind should be done on such afternoons without the express sanction of the Senatus; that in the event of such class work being sanctioned, the absence of the student there from should be excused by his presence in the playing field; and that arrangements should be made if possible to give him alternative hours of instruction....(8) That medical examination should be provided for and made compulsory on students under the age of eighteen; that for that purpose both a male and a female examiner should be appointed...(10) That the expense consequent on the adoption of the above recommendations, in addition to that which is at present being annually incurred in grants for athletics and social needs among the students, would warrant the University in imposing an addition of 10s. 6d. to the existing matriculation fee. The Committee on Educational Policy recommend the Senatus to submit to the University Court the following observations on points:- (1) Agreed...(3) Agree. The Form provided should have a further question - 'Do you intend to join the O.T.C.?...(5) For this recommendation the Committee would substitute the following:- 'That Wednesday afternoons from one o'clock onwards should be free of class work of any kind as far as practicable....The Committee. They also recommend that all possible encouragement should be given to such means of exercise as 'tramping,' for which the surroundings of Edinburgh provide unique facilities, cross country running and golf, all of which would help to relieve the congested condition of the playing fields. Adopted by the Senatus.¹

¹ University of Edinburgh Senatus Academicus. Printed Minutes Volume IV Oct. 1924 to July 1928 pp 627-628

APPENDIX 8

Edinburgh University Political and Ideological Debates 1930-1939

DATE	SOCIETY	MOTION	VOTE
4/11/30	Hist. Soc.	'That the present production of war-literature is unjustified'	11-14
9/12/30	Union	'That this House Approves the Theory and Practice of Democracy.'	24-27
20/11/31	Cosmo. Soc.	'The Europe will have peace for the next 50 years'	25-10
24/11/31	Diag. Soc.	'That the Days of our Youth are the Days of our Glory.'	5-6
1/12/31	Union Deb.	'That the Time is Now Ripe for the Sterilisation of the Unfit'	122-38
8/12/31	Diag. Soc.	'That this House would welcome a Return to Paganism.'	3-6
23/02/32	Diag. Soc.	'That this House Approves of Scottish Nationalism.'	5-2
19/11/32	Celtic Soc.	That Scottish Home Rule would not benefit the Highlands.'	16-13
21/11/32	Celtic Soc.	'That Nationalism is a Curse.'	14-13
26/11/32	Celtic Soc.	'That it is better to heave a brick than to heave a sigh.'	8-2
29/11/32	Diag. Soc.	'That the Spread of English Civilisation in the Highlands is to be deplored.'	'Casting'
7/02/33	Diag. Soc.	'That Birth Control is an Urgent Necessity.'	3-6
12/10/33	Dial. Soc.	'That it is justifiable to risk national security in the promotion of World Disarmament.'	6-4
01/11/33	Ladies' Ed. Deb. Soc.	'Is Fascism making for the happiness and prosperity of Italy?'	21-4
9/11/33	Dial. Soc.	'That Discipline is the Urgent need of the Day.'	8-3
28/11/33	Union	'That this House Deplores the Rise of Fascism'	89-49
30/11/33	Dial. Soc.	'That Home Rule would be advantageous to Scotland.'	5-9
9/01/34	Union	'That the Scottish Renaissance is a Pernicious Illusion.'	40-41
19/10/34	Unspecified	That Peace is Worth any Price'	21-12
11/01/34	Hist. Soc.	'That the British Empire will follow that of Rome.'	6-11
24/01/34	Celtic Soc.	'That great men are the mirrors rather than the moulders of their age.'	7-15

18/10/34	Dial. Soc.	'That Universal Peace can only be obtained through a League of Nations.'	6-4
1/11/34	Dial. Soc.	'That this House protests against the abuse of government in Germany.'	'Equal'
16/11/34	Hist. Soc.	'That the intercourse of nations cannot be regulated by the rule of morality.'	7-21
29/11/34	Dial. Soc.	'That the Freedom of the Individual should not be sacrificed to the State.'	9-5
11/01/35	Hist. Soc.	'That the British Empire will Follow that of Rome'	6-11
7/06/35	Hist. Soc.	'That this House applauds the Brown Shirt when it is anti-Semite.'	?
19/10/35	Celtic Soc.	'That Environment, and not Heredity, makes the Highlander.'	14-7
25/10/35	Hist. Soc.	'That the Road to Internationalism lies through Nationalism.'	10-9
1/11/35	Hist. Soc.	'That Unarmed Prophets have proved Ineffectual.'	6-17
15/11/35	Hist. Soc.	'That the House regrets the Union of 1707.'	12-4
22/11/35	Diag. Soc.	'That India is lost to the Empire'	6-13
28/11/35	Dial. Soc.	'That fortune favours the brave.'	6-4
16/01/36	Dial. Soc.	'That War is the Result of Peace.'	5-3
30/01/36	Dial. Soc.	'That leaders are never elected.'	5-2
7/02/36	Unspecified	'That this House Approves of Unilateral Disarmament'	19-11
22/02/36	Diag. Soc.	'That this House is in Sympathy with Scottish Nationalism.'	8-12
7/11/36	Hist. Soc.	'That this House approves of Unilateral Disarmament.'	11-14
12/11/36	Dial. Soc.	'That the future of civilisation depends upon birth control.'	3-5
14/01/37	Dial. Soc.	'That Europe owes more to the Jew than to the Prussian.'	7-2
4/02/37	Union	'Britons ever shall be Slaves'	106-154
11/02/37	Dial. Soc.	'That History has been determined more by heredity than environment.'	2-4
9/03/37	Diag. Soc.	'That this country would be better governed by a Dictator than by a Democratic Parliament.'	6-11
27/04/37	Diag. Soc.	'That a return to Paganism is desirable.'	5-6
4/05/37	Dial. Soc.	'That a censorship of the Press is necessary.'	3-4
8/11/37	Union Deb.	'The British Empire is a grave menace to World Peace.' (Union Deb.)	65-76
1/11/38	Diag. Soc.	'That Conscription is a benefit to Youth.'	'Casting'
8/11/38	Diag. Soc.	'That the Blackguard of Genius is more worthy of admiration than the Honest Blockhead.'	4-6

10/11/38	Dial. Soc.	'That the censorship of the Press is unjustifiable.'	7-4
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KEY

Bord. Assoc.	-	Borderers Association
Caith. Assoc.	-	Caithness Association
Celt. Soc.	-	Celtic Society
Ch. of Scot. Soc.	-	Church of Scotland Society
D. and G. Soc.	-	Dumfries and Galloway Society
Diag. Soc.	-	Diagnostic Society
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Econ. Soc.	-	Economics Society
Fab. Soc.	-	Fabian Society
Hist. Soc.	-	History Society
Phil. Soc.	-	Philomathic Society
Theol. Soc.	-	Theological Society
U. F. Church Soc.	-	United Free Church Society
Wom. Deb. Soc.	-	Women's Debating Society

APPENDIX 9

University of Edinburgh Statistics 1922-1939

Number of Students and Government Grant 1922-1938

Year	Full-time Students	Income (£)	Parliamentary / Treasury Grant (£) ¹	Government Grant as Percentage of Income
1922-23	4370	231,447	70,000	30.2
1929-30	4440	265,644	98,914	37.2
1930-31	4437	283,879	110,943	39.1
1931-32	4327	285,707	112,064	39.1
1932-33	4243	284,975	111,646	39.2
1933-34	4251	284,709	110,833	38.9
1935-36	3895	286,575	99,777	34.8
1936-37	3843	297,752	111,469	37.4
1937-38	3762	303,186	111,658	36.8

Figures taken from: University Grants Committee. Returns from Universities and University Colleges In Receipt of Treasury Grant. 1922-32 (London: HMSO, 1932)
Also Volume 1932-38.

University of Edinburgh Officers' Training Corps Membership 1919-1939

Year	OTC Membership
1919-20	193
1920-21	235
1925-26	358
1927-28	352
1932-33	385
1934-35	416
1935-36	440
1936-37	448
1938-39	550

¹ These two separate governmental grants were consolidated after the creation of the University Grants Committee in 1919.

APPENDIX 10

Prominent University of Edinburgh Alumni 1914-1939 **(As Listed in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography)**

Methodology

Individuals listed are either former University of Edinburgh students publicly active during the period at hand, or those actually engaged in studies who became prominent later.

Each listing consists of the individual's name, dates, main University of Edinburgh Degree(s) and / or date of graduation (where specified in the Oxford DNB article), primary public activities, political party where relevant, and Internet address of Oxford DNB article. Ordered by date of birth within each category

Politics and Social Campaigning

Kirk, Sir John (1832–1922). MD 1854. Naturalist and political agent

<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34336>

Wedderburn, Sir William, fourth baronet (1838–1918). Administrator in India and politician. Liberal Party

<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/41165>

Stopes, Charlotte Brown Carmichael (1840–1929). Certificate of Arts c. 1870. Feminist and literary scholar

<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/53016>

Lumsden, Dame Louisa Innes (1840–1935). Non-graduating. Promoter of women's education, headmistress, and suffragist

<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/48571>

Finlay, Robert Bannatyne, first Viscount Finlay (1842–1929). MB ChB 1864. Lord Chancellor. Liberal Party

<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33132>

Bryce, (John) Annan (1843–1923). Merchant and politician. Liberal Party

<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/49022>

Elliot, Arthur Ralph Douglas (1846–1923). 1863 Non-graduating. Politician and journalist. Liberal Party

<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32999>

Walker, Mary Russell (1846–1938). Certificate in Arts c. 1876. Headmistress and promoter of women's education

<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/48670>

Shaw, Thomas, first Baron Craigmyle (1850–1937). Lawyer and politician. Liberal Party.

<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36051>

Younger, George, first Viscount Younger of Leckie (1851–1929). Brewer and politician. Conservative and Unionist Party

<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/37082>

Ker, Alice Jane Shannan Stewart (1853–1943). Non-graduating. Doctor and suffragette
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/63874>

Simson, Frances Helen (1854–1938). MA 1893. Promoter of women's higher education and suffragist
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/60799>

Haldane, Richard Burdon, Viscount Haldane (1856–1928). MA c. 1874. Politician, educationist, and Lord Chancellor. Liberal Party
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33643>

King, Sir (Frederic). Truby (1858–1938). MB CM 1886. Promoter of the child welfare movement
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34320>

Somerville [*née* Gibb], Euphemia Gilchrist (1860–1935). Social worker and local politician. Independent
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/69908>

Williamson, Archibald, first Baron Forres (1860–1931). Merchant and politician. Liberal Party.
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/48399>

Oliver, Frederick Scott (1864–1934). Draper and polemicist
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35305>

Munro, Robert, Baron Alness (1868–1955). LLB 1892. Lawyer and politician. Liberal Party
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/40352>

Duncan, Sir Patrick (1870–1943). Politician in South Africa and Governor-General of the Union of South Africa
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32931>

Macmillan, (Jessie). Chrystal (1872–1937). MA 1900. Barrister and political activist
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/38526>

Hogge, James Myles [*formerly* James-Miles] (1873–1928). MA 1897. Social researcher and politician
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/45599>

Alcindor, John (1873–1924). General practitioner and leader of the African Progress Union
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/57173>

Melville, Frances Helen (1873–1962). MA 1897. Promoter of higher education for women in Scotland and suffragist
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/38528>

Gilmour, Sir John, of Lundin and Montrave, second baronet (1876–1940). Politician. Conservative Party
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33408>

Saleeby, Caleb Williams Elijah (1878–1940). MB ChB 1901. Writer and eugenicist
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/47854>

Geddes, Auckland Campbell, first Baron Geddes (1879–1954). MD 1908. Politician and businessman. Conservative and Unionist Party
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33359>

Macpherson, (James). Ian, first Baron Strathcarron (1880–1937). LLB c. 1903. Politician. Liberal Party
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34818>

Skelton, (Archibald). Noel (1880–1935). c 1901. Politician. Conservative and Unionist Party
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/40226>
Shiels, Sir (Thomas). Drummond (1881–1953). MB ChB 1924. Physician and politician. Labour Party
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36068>
Anderson, John, first Viscount Waverley (1882–1958). BSc MA 1903. Civil service administrator and politician. Conservative and Unionist Party
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30409>
Bright, Herbert Christian Bankole- (1883–1958). 1910. Medical practitioner and politician in Sierra Leone
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/76287>
Graham, William (1887–1932). LLB 1917. Politician. Independent Labour Party and Labour Party
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33508>
Woodburn, Arthur (1890–1978). Non-graduating. Politician Independent Labour Party
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/56498>
Morrison, William Shepherd, first Viscount Dunrossil (1893–1961). MA 1920. Politician. Conservative and Unionist Party
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35123>
Kidd [married name MacDonald], Dame Margaret Henderson (1900–1989). LLB 1922 Lawyer and politician. Conservative and Unionist Party.
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/49228>
Lee, Janet [Jennie], Baroness Lee of Asheridge (1904–1988). LLB 1926. Politician. Independent Labour Party and Labour Party
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/39853>
Hamilton, George Nigel Douglas, tenth earl of Selkirk (1906–1994). LLB 1933. Politician and diplomatist. Conservative and Unionist Party
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/55705>
Pitt, David Thomas, Baron Pitt of Hampstead (1913–1994). MB ChB 1938. General practitioner and politician. West Indian National Party
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/55254>

Domestic and Imperial Government Administration

Birdwood, Sir George Christopher Molesworth (1832–1917). MD 1854. Administrator in India
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/31896>
Fraser, Sir Andrew Henderson Leith (1848–1919). MA 1868. Administrator in India
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33248>
Scott, Sir James George (1851–1935). Non-graduating. Administrator in Burma and author
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35989>
Fulton, Thomas Wemyss [formerly Wemyss Alexander Thomas Fulton] (1855–1929). 1884 MB CM. Fisheries authority and ocean law publicist
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/57609>

Peterson, Sir William (1856–1921). Classical scholar and educationist
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35490>

Lockhart, Sir James Haldane Stewart (1858–1937). MA 1876. Colonial official and art collector
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/63594>

Blair, Sir Robert (1859–1935). MA 1880. Educational administrator
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/46688>

Mackenzie, William Warrender, first Baron Amulree (1860–1942). LLB 1885. Lawyer and industrial arbitrator
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34757>

Macdonald, Sir George (1862–1940). MA 1882. Classical scholar and civil servant
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34700>

Robertson, Sir John (1862–1936). MB CM 1884. Public health administrator
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/57203>

Mackenzie, Sir (William). Leslie (1862–1935). Non-graduating. Health administrator
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/55652>

Lorimer, John Gordon (1870–1914). Administrator in India
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/38933>

Millard, Charles Killick (1870–1952). Public health official and advocate of voluntary euthanasia
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/74648>

Newman, Sir George (1870–1948). MB 1892. Medical officer of health
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35215>

Watson, Alexandra Mary Chalmers [Mona; née Alexandra Mary Geddes] (1872–1936). MB CM 1896. Medical practitioner and head of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/67666>

Keith, Sir William John (1873–1937). MA 1895. Administrator in Burma
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34260>

Johnston, Sir Reginald Fleming (1874–1938). 1892–94. Colonial administrator and Sinologist
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34212>

Menzies, Sir Frederick Norton Kay (1875–1949). MB 1899. Medical officer of health
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34987>

Stewart, Sir (Samuel). Findlater (1879–1960). MA 1899. Civil servant
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36298>

Gardiner, Sir Thomas Robert (1883–1964). MA 1905. Civil servant
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33326>

Fairfield, (Josephine). Letitia Denny (1885–1978). MB ChB 1907. Public health physician and campaigner for social reform
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/54196>

Hood, Sir Alexander (1888–1980). MB ChB 1910. Army medical officer and colonial governor
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/57375>

Douglas, Sir William Scott (1890–1953). MA 1912. Civil servant
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32877>

Milne, Sir David (1896–1972). MA c. 1920. Civil servant
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/40347>
Macpherson, Sir John Stuart (1898–1971). MA 1921. Governor-general of Nigeria
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/37726>
Snedden, Sir Richard (1900–1970). LLB 1922. Shipping industry administrator
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36176>
Bryce, Dame Isabel Graham [*née* Isabella Lorrain Smith] (1902–1997). MA c. 1925. Public servant
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/66256>
Murrie, Sir William Stuart (1903–1994). Civil servant
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/55161>
Johnston, Sir Alexander (1905–1994). MA 1927. Public servant
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/55056>
Black, Sir Robert Brown [Robin] (1906–1999). MA 1928. Colonial administrator
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/73144>
Fleming, (John). Marcus (1911–1976). MA 1932. Economist and civil servant
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/66810>
Daniels, Henry Ellis (1912–2000). MA 1933. Statistician
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/74126>
Haddow, Sir (Thomas). Douglas (1913–1986). MA 1932. Civil servant
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/40323>
Martin, Sir David Christie (1914–1976). PhD 1939. Scientific administrator
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/31417>
Robertson, Ian Macbeth (1918–1992). 1939. Poet and civil servant
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/51302>

Education, Scholarship and Research

Geikie, Sir Archibald (1835–1924). MA 1855. Geologist and historian
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33364>
Brown, Alexander Crum (1838–1922). 1861 MD. Chemist
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/37229>
Fraser, Sir Thomas Richard (1841–1920). MD 1862 Pharmacologist
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33255>
Omond, George William Thomson (1846–1929). MA 1868. Historian
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/50982>
Paul, Sir James Balfour (1846–1931). Herald and genealogist
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/63941>
Stewart, John Alexander (1846–1933). MA c. 1866. Philosopher
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36296>
Brown, Peter Hume (1849–1918). MA 1878. Historian
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32115>
Cunningham, William (1849–1919). MA 1869. Economic historian and Church of England clergyman
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32669>
Chisholm, George Goudie (1850–1930). MA 1871. Geographer
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/51478>

Nicholson, Joseph Shield (1850–1927). MA 1873. Economist
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35229>

Balfour, Sir Isaac Bayley (1853–1922). BSc. 1873. Botanist
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30558>

Geddes, Sir Patrick (1854–1932). Non-graduating 1874. Social evolutionist and city planner
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33361>

Miller, Florence Fenwick (1854–1935). Non-graduating. Journalist and public lecturer
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/37764>

Bruce, Sir David (1855–1931). MB CM 1881. Bacteriologist and parasitologist
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32132>

Ewing, Sir (James). Alfred (1855–1935). 1878. Engineer and cryptographer
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33058>

Sorley, William Ritchie (1855–1935). c. 1873. Philosopher
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